

LIONESSE





WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

(Incorporating the QMAAC & ATS Comrades Association)

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Ms A Orlinski (Northern)

Mrs W Hooton (Eastern)

Miss N Smith (London & South East)

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Mrs S Bingham (South & South West)

Tim Savage (NEM)

Jenny Ogden (NEM)

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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”.

I have to start with the fantastic response to the Grand Reunion next year. Thank you to all of those who are supporting this event. We still have room at the tables so please if you have not responded, do so soon *[Editor – this was written when we still did have space, the full weekend spaces are now full, sorry]*. This is going to be a weekend to remember. Plans for our Centenary are continuing apace and I hope that as many of you as possible join us at some point throughout the year.

One highpoint for me over the last six months has to be Remembrance week. Once again we were represented at the Field of Remembrance at Westminster and then later in the week, 100 of us marched proudly at the Cenotaph. Mention must go to Betty Herschel who, ably pushed by her son George, was our only ATS Lady on Parade. I know that there were hundreds of parades all over the Country where the ATS and the WRAC were represented and I look forward to seeing all of the photographs in due course.

Our publicity and marketing work is gaining pace. Pat Rosewell, Betty Webb and I found ourselves at early o'clock in London on the airwaves with Radio 5 Live. Nicky Campbell was gentle with us all and our 15 minute slot turned into a 2 hour phone in. A day to remember and I have included some photographs in this edition. We have had lots of coverage on line and our social media presence is now firmly established. Thank you to all those involved.

We have entered into a partnership with the National Army Museum from July to October 2019. They have offered us a dedicated gallery space which will enable us to get some items out of storage that were gifted when the WRAC Museum closed. We have historical items from as early as 1917 and it will be fantastic to see some of these again. The visual display will tell the story of the Association over the last 100 years and will be supported by a comprehensive programme of talks and events. Watch this space for more details.

Registration of the WRAC Association Logo

As initially stated in the previous Lioness, we are continuing to look at the options to protect our Association 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. This action will be taken in the early part of 2019. By doing this we 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.

The WRAC Association is now poised to start its' Centenary year. A lot of hard work has already gone into this and I remain extremely grateful to all Area Co-ordinators, Branch Secretaries and Treasurers and anyone who organises and provides for any kind of meet up or fund raising activity. I hope to see as many of you as possible next year and I would encourage all of you to have a look at the 100 suggestions in Lioness 2/18 to see how you might celebrate with us. Let's have a year to remember.

Ali Brown

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PHOTO CREDITS:

FRONT COVER

Field of Remembrance, Cenotaph & Garden Of Remembrance, St Paul's Cathedral,

BACK COVER: Centenary Logo & Corps antecedents badges



You have all done it again, come up trumps with stories, photos, and news for this edition. You have obviously been very busy, one way or another, and it is great to read your news, see your pictures and recollections.

I was asked recently if anyone had told me about the Association's Centenary at my interview, to which I replied "no". I had been told about the Grand Reunion and how popular and special it is to you all, but the rest of the Centenary was still a mystery. Well, the 'mystery' has been busy revealing itself over the past few months. Take a look at our Events Calendar and pages for more information on what is now planned, when and where. While the Grand Reunion Weekend is now fully (and over-) subscribed (with a waiting list), there is still opportunity for you to join us at other Centenary events.

However, this is your Association's Centenary, so please, let us know what you might be organising for your friends, branch and/or area. Whilst we have come up with a potential 100 ways to celebrate, the list is not exhaustive – share your ideas; we can always increase the list!

National Armed Forces Day 2019 is being hosted by Wiltshire County and Salisbury City Council. This is being used by the local authorities to prove that Salisbury is 'open for business' and is a great place to visit. Of course, Salisbury is in the middle of so many military establishments – Army (naturally, and Tidworth is growing hugely to take those being relocated back 'home' from Germany), Royal Navy and RAF.

As a result of the wonderful publicity we achieved around Remembrancetide 2018 (Radio 5-live and Channel 4), etc), we know that making more people aware of the Association's existence can only be good – which led to increased Membership, and increased awareness of the Benevolence Fund and it's supportive work for ex-ATS and WRAC ladies. We are therefore hoping we can build on the relationships forged last year to further increase our profile and highlight all the amazing things that you, our Members, get up to and the networks you build and events you organise, really emphasizing that the Association "Supports Women Who Served".

Because of all that is going on the HQ Office is even busier than usual – and we are all looking forward to seeing as many of you as possible at some / all of the various ‘national’ events.

Penny Muxworthy
editor@wracassociation.org.uk

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MARKETING / PR REPORT

Curious PR

Below is a list of the coverage secured post-August last year-

KCW Today – Online AND in the Print Issue
 'The Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) Celebrates The 80th
 Anniversary of its Founding'
 Publication date: August 2018

August 2018

Kensington, Chelsea & Westminster Today

39

EVENTS SUPPLEMENT

online: www.KCWToday.co.uk

The Auxiliary
Territorial Service
(ATS)
Celebrates the 80th
Anniversary of its Founding.

The National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas in Staffordshire set the scene for an evocative reunion of brave ladies, heroines actually, of World War II who had served in the ATS and the Women's Royal Army Corps (WRAC).

The July sun shone on the peaceful countryside as Dame Kelly Holmes re-dedicated the 'Lady ATS Statue' in the WRAC Association Plot. This life-size statue by Andy Comyn shows an ATS woman wearing basic khaki uniform. It was originally unveiled in 2006 as a memorial of the role played by women in World War II. It has recently been restored and moved to the WRAC Plot at the National Memorial Arboretum.



Stafford Deputy Military Lieutenant, Mrs Lesley Knighton MBE DL. Andy Comyn, Col (Rtd) Alison Brown, Vice President of WRAC Association, and Padre Reverend Sue Wing of the

Another heroic lady present was Charmaine 'Bimbo' Coleman, who acquired her nickname from a Jim Reeves song popular at the time. She has recently endured wind pressure up to 100 miles per hour on a 'wing walk' she undertook for charity. She has also performed skydives in tandem, also for charity. Charmaine served in the WRAC and in the Royal Military Police in the Middle East, Cyprus, Germany and Northern Ireland. She is a happy resident of Royal Hospital Chelsea and harbours a wish to abscond down the Shard!

Helen Andrews was recruited to work at Bletchley Park at a very young age as she had excellent language skills. The work at Bletchley was so secret even her parents did not know what she was doing. The operation remained secret until 1975. There are many unsung heroes of World War II and those who worked at Bletchley are among them. Their work shortened the War, thus

The 80th Anniversary of the Founding of the ATS was celebrated at the National Memorial Arboretum, in July, 2018 in a fitting manner with pride patriotism and dignity.

Shropshire Star (Online)

“Codebreaker Betty: The Shropshire pensioner who played key role at Bletchley Park”

BBC 5 LIVE

“Interview on BBC 5 Live with the WRAC women, talking about their challenges, love for the association and past experiences”
Publication date: 7th November 2018

Channel 4 News

“Women veterans feel forgotten, despite a new national support strategy”
Broadcast date: December 3rd 2018

From HQ

Social media – posts going out almost daily, including past recruiting posters. Connectivity with social media users increasing all the time.

Tanya met with a few influential social-media administrators (not all WRAC Assoc) to talk about increasing even more the Association's reach.

Media enquiries - Have received enquiries from two foreign / long-story journalists. One published in Lioness – we have not been able to help with either.
Have received enquiry from a US-based facebook group called “Women who served” looking for a connection – still to be actioned, but will.

Press releases – Wrote 'template' press releases for Branches / Areas to use around Remembrance-tide and again for 1st February. Not aware of any being used for Remembrance. Ali and Penny writing initial press releases for Curious to 'work-up', distribute and follow-up
A lot of time being spent sourcing members with 'stories' (inc Benevolence).
Still need Members' and Beneficiaries with 'stories' for PR.

RADIO 5 LIVE - TAKING TO THE AIRWAYS Ali Brown

A rainy morning in Battersea saw Pat Roswell (Budgie) and I getting into a BBC car and speeding through the streets of London to Broadcasting House. We had been invited to appear on the Radio 5 Live Breakfast Show hosted by Nicky Campbell, to talk about the WRAC Association.

On arrival at Broadcasting House we entered the foyer and were immediately amazed by the size of the building. Six floors of glass greeted us crammed with people and technical equipment and, having signed in and met Hannah from Curious PR, we were escorted to the Radio 5 Live studio. Our first surprise was that Nicky Campbell was actually in Salford and thus was on a video screen, so sadly we did not get to meet him in person. Betty Webb then joined us, also remotely, from a studio in Birmingham. Pat and I were at first a bit overwhelmed by all the technical stuff surrounding us but quickly found the right microphone and started to watch the screens for the countdown to our piece.



So headphones on and the countdown started. From the first moment we were on air the time just flew by. Betty recounted some of her experiences from serving at Bletchley Park and then Pat and I talked about our experiences in the Army. Nicky put all of us at ease immediately and we were delighted to be asked to stay on for the rest of the programme to take part in a phone in. Unbeknown to us, calls were already being made to the Radio Station from people wanting to tell theirs or their relatives' stories of women in the Army. Sadly Betty could not join us for the phone in as she had already been grabbed by BBC West Midland for another broadcast.

The phone in was brilliant. We heard the experiences of those who had served in the WRAC, the Womens' Land Army, as Firewomen in WW2 and others involved in reserved occupations. The conversation flowed easily and I know I can speak for Pat when we say we thoroughly enjoyed the whole experience. When we left Broadcasting House, via photographs with the Dalek and the Tardis, we were literally bubbling with excitement and headed straight for a very late breakfast.

The morning was fantastic publicity for the WRAC Association and we were able to explain what we do and why we do it.

Thanks must go to Curious PR for getting this opportunity for us.



***Pat (Budgie) Rosewall and Ali Brown
ready for Radio 5-live interview***

Dear Penny,

I have recently taken over as the curator of the AGC Museum, as Ian retired at the end of August. I am currently in the very early planning stages of a temporary joint exhibition focusing on women in the Army with the curator of the Rifles Museum Melanie Marsh. The Rifles are soon to have their first female Riflemen joining in March 2019, and we are hoping that the exhibition will be open for International Women's Day (8th March). It is a bit short notice, but we are looking for personal stories of women, especially those who served with the Rifles or their antecedents. We are hoping to bring to light the history of women with and in the infantry, with a focus on the Rifles as one of the first infantry units to allow women in certain combat roles.

Bianca Taubert
Curator, The AGC Museum

[Please send your responses to the WRAC office and we will happily forward them on]

Dear Ladies,

I should like to share a heart-warming story with you. Earlier this week [December 2018], I was approached by a young lady who recognised the RBL badge I was wearing. "Could I wait a minute, while her son finished his writing?" she asked. Looking round I saw a small boy, about 5 years old, with his leg in plaster. He was writing furiously, then using his crutches he came to me and gave me the envelope with 'SOJERS' written on it. "My mummy let me get some money out of my bank for the sojers, because I've only broken my leg and they didn't chop it off, like they do to sojers". I was taken aback, but managed to pin a RBL "Thank you" badge, off my coat, onto his anorak. The expression on his face was wonderful.

A medal – Wow!

With children like this, we need have no worries for the future – bless him. I never even found out his name.

Val Odell
Grantham

Dear Editor,

My sister, Liz Eberlie enlisted in the ATS in March 1943, was commissioned that winter and served in Intelligence on HQ staffs between 1944 and 1947, and I am publishing a book about her wartime experiences. It is entitled "Liz's War: An Intelligence Officer in France and the Far East".

Short extract:

- Liz was one of the very few young women allowed to handle Ultra material, deciphered from enemy signals at Bletchley Park.
- she worked on Ultra at the headquarters of both General Eisenhower, Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Western Europe, and Lord Mountbatten, Supreme Commander in South East Asia.
- on Eisenhower's staff, she was one of the first British service-women to land and work in France after D Day.
- having worked with the Airborne Army for a spell, she was given the right to wear the maroon beret of the British Parachute Regiment.
- she was awarded the Bronze Star by the Americans.
- she was the only woman to work on Intelligence at Mountbatten's headquarters in Singapore.
- she visited Burma and Hong Kong in the immediate aftermath of the Japanese occupation.
- she was the only woman on the General Staff to serve in Indonesia during the uneasy peace there in early 1946.

Copies have been available from October 31st. If anyone is interested I am asking £14 a copy to cover printing costs. Please contact: 01822 618974.

Dick Eberlie



Liz Eberlie, later Liz Garvin, of Brickelhurst Manor, Stonegate, East Sussex, served during the war as an ATS Officer in Military Intelligence. Travelling widely, she was at the centre of many military operations, doing work that was always demanding, often exciting and sometimes harrowing.



Available at £14 plus p and p from Dick Eberlie,
6 Vigo Mews, Tavistock, PL19 0RG,
on 01822 618974
or dickeberlie@gmail.com

Dear Editor

Magic spoke when "80 years of the ATS" arrived at my house just before November 11, which is 'Veterans Day' here in the USA. And it so happened that November 11 2018 signified the 100th Anniversary of the end of World War 1. Then ... November 10 2018 was the 80th anniversary of 'Kristallnacht', the "Night of the Broken Glass", in Austria and Germany. It was the beginning of the Holocaust.

My daughter, Heidi, was asked to give a presentation at her place of work on November 12, just after Veterans Day. She named it "From Victim to Victory". I, her Mom, was the Victim, destined for annihilation, along with my family by Hitler, in Vienna, Austria. My escape to England saved my life. I was privileged to join the ATS in 1941, and to serve until February 1946.

I met my husband, Aubrey, after moving to the United States during the 1950's. He had served in the Navy during World War II. Heidi's presentation spoke of my bitter years during the Nazi rule and my journey onto Victory of the war in England. "From Victim to Victory"! Our children are proud of their veteran parents!

*Sincerely
Frances Nunnally (nee Franz Huppert)
Richmond, VA, USA*



Franziska Huppert
ATS



Aubrey W. Nunnally
US Navy
Aviation Ordnanceman
Seaman Second Class

Research project: WRAC in Malaya and Northern Ireland

I am a PhD student at the University of Bath and am researching the involvement of women in British counterinsurgency campaigns in particular in Malaya and Northern Ireland (as well as Afghanistan and contemporary operations). I have been researching the work of the Women's Institute and British Red Cross with Lady Templar in Malaya and know that 4 Independent Company of the WRAC were also deployed in Malaya commanded by Anne Field. I am struggling to find out about the work of 4 Independent Company and whether they had any interaction with the Malayan community.

I am also interested in the employment of the WRAC in Northern Ireland in an operational capacity including special duties, intelligence or any work with the community or women's groups.

If anyone can offer an insight into either campaign, I would be keen to hear from you. Please email me, Hannah West, hrw38@bath.ac.uk.

[Editor's note: this is a repeated request as Hannah has been off on maternity leave between the two letters. If anyone can help her that would be wonderful.]

ASSOCIATION VISION STATEMENT AND STRAPLINE

At a meeting of your Trustees in February 2017, and as confirmed at the March AGM, the following Association Vision Statement and Strapline have been adopted:

Association Vision Statement

To be a recognised and accessible charity providing support for women who have served in the ATS, ATS TA, WRAC, WRAC TA and WRAC TAVR, to which our members are proud to belong.

Supporting Strapline

Supporting Women who Served

along with a **Trustees Vision Statement:**

To be an effective Board of Trustees who deliver the Charity's vision both now and in the future.

Reference Ann Robson, Scotland

"Well, the big day (107th birthday) went off well on Friday with lots of cards, and including your lovely flowers! My aunt (Ann Robson) has asked me to thank you on her behalf. To her great surprise and initial bewilderment Scottish Television turned up as did the Edinburgh Evening News. Being of retirement age myself I duly bought copies of the newspaper to send to our children and watched the STV news - only to find "it's all on Facebook, Mum". Apparently, the whole thing has 'gone viral'!!

I took my aunt up to Dunblane hydro yesterday and we had a lovely afternoon. The excerpts you (Tanya) sent me were a great help as it proved to the reception staff I was not imagining things, and various older members of staff emerged from the bowels of the hotel to tell us they had heard of the ATS being there but knew little more. To my aunt's delight we were shown a current function room which was originally the indoor swimming pool, now floored over. I also had had a helpful contact in the local history section of the museum there and I am going to put her in touch with some of the staff at the Hydro.

I returned her to the care home yesterday evening, very tired but quite exhilarated by the outing. Thank you again for the flowers, and for your help in unearthing the records you managed to find.

Best wishes
Katharine

[Editor: As mentioned in the previous Lioness, we believe Ann to be the oldest surviving member of the ATS – so huge Congratulations]

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.**

Comings and Goings

TIM SAVAGE Non-Executive Member, Council & Trustees

We welcome Tim Savage to the Association Council and Trustees as a Non-Executive Member. His first set of meetings will be while this Lioness is at the printer, so a bio on Tim will appear in the next edition.

'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 previously 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".

South & South West – Sharon Bingham has 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.

Scotland & Northern Ireland – Jo Young has announced she will be standing down later this year, so if you are in this area (branches include Aberdeen, Dumfriesshire, Edinburgh, Fife & Tayside, Glasgow, Stirling, Ulster and West of Scotland) and are interested, please let us know.

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

BAND BRANCH CO-ORDINATOR

As you will see from the Band-Branch report, Ann Jones has stepped as branch secretary/contact. If you are interested in seeing this branch continue and to liaise with fellow band members, please let us 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.



Notices A - Z

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 often available as an audio version, although this can depend on the size of the document (the larger it is, the more difficult to record). 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 **31st July 2019**. 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 55 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 07 Nov 2019 Field of Remembrance, Westminster Abbey
Sun 10 Nov 2019 Cenotaph Parade – Ticket applications need to be made by letter via Tanya, or email only (office.manager@wracassociation.org.uk), no later than 01 July 2019

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 10 Nov 2019 Guildford Borough Remembrance events – Details will follow when confirmed.

Sun 10 Nov 2019 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). For 2019 we would like to cement our historic links with our 'mother city' and so encourage you to apply to attend here, especially if you are unsuccessful with tickets for the London Cenotaph. Please apply to the Association Office by email (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 in November 2019 at The Victory Services Club. For more details email wracofficersdc@gmail.com or visit the Facebook Closed Group 'WRAC Officers' Dining Club'.

WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

CENTENARY COMMEMORATION At NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM



A Service of Commemoration and Rededicate for the WRAC Association, will take place on Sunday 7th July 2019 in the Association Plot at the National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, Shropshire.

DRAFT programme: 14.00 Service of Commemoration & Rededication
15.00 Afternoon Tea

Exact start time and programme will be confirmed.

Please use Reply Form, to indicate your wish to attend this event. Replies required by **Friday 14th June 2019**.

BOOKING FORM for WRAC ASSOCIATION CENTENARY COMMEMORATION/STATUE REDEDICATION 7th July 2019

I wish to attend the WRAC Association Commemoration / Rededication Service, and afternoon tea on Sunday 7th July 2019 at the National Memorial Arboretum, Shropshire:

Surname:

Christian Name (known as):

Email:

Tel No:

Address:

..... Post Code:

Dietary Requirements:

Return to: WRAC Association, Unit 11, Basepoint, 1 Winnall Valley Road, Winchester, SO23 0LD by 14th June 2019, or email to office.manager@wracassociation.org.uk

ARMED FORCES DAY 2019 Friday 27th – Sunday 29th June, Salisbury

A 3-day Festival of all things military, including veterans. Salisbury, and Wiltshire, are planning to make this the biggest and best National Armed Forces Day event so far. The 'day' has grown to be a 3-day weekend at the end of June.

We have already committed to be involved with the 3-day event and will have a stand there to promote the Association and Ben. Fund. If you are able to help us staff this stand please let HQ office know – the more the merrier!

Hopefully this will provide us with an ideal opportunity to get the Association and Ben. Fund's name out to as many women who served, and their families.

WRAC LIONESSES 7th ANNUAL 10k Run



This year the
WRAC Association
is
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"



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

The Grand Reunion Weekend package (Friday to Sunday inclusive) is FULLY BOOKED (and we already have a waiting list, that we cannot guarantee to fulfil). This means that the Friday evening and Saturday night Dinners are fully booked.

However, there is still the possibility for Members to attend the VVIP Reception at Guildford Cathedral on the Friday afternoon/evening; the Annual General Meeting and Beating Retreat on the Saturday; and the Parade on Sunday morning.

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.

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

Accommodation

You are responsible for your own accommodation reservation(s). 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.

Provisional Programme

Using the Grand Harbour Hotel as our event centre the weekend's 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 and disco
- 01.00 Disco ends and bar closes

Dress Code: VVIP Reception – Day Dress

Buffet Dinner – Wonderful Women fancy dress
(optional and NOT mandatory)

Guildford Cathedral Reception

We will ensure that everyone going by coach transport from Southampton to Guildford, and back, are appropriately briefed before getting on, and off, the coaches. 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 can join us for just the Reception at £25 per Association Member (£30 per Non-member), including refreshments but not transport.

Saturday 23 Mar

Morning for you to relax, enjoy 'retail' (or other) therapy, or visit historic Southampton

14.00 AGM (see separate page for Agenda)

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

Dress Code: Evening / Cocktail wear

Seating Plan: Please ensure you have informed HQ office if you have seating preferences. The office will do its best but cannot guarantee all requests.

Sunday 24 Mar (morning)

10.30 Drumhead Service (in Grand Harbour Hotel)

Parade, local to the Grand Harbour Hotel

After which you are free to leave for home, or whatever plans you have made.

Grand Draw

Tickets for the Grand Draw, with some fabulous cash prizes to be won, are £1 each and will be available at the Grand Harbour Hotel Friday and Saturday morning. You should have received a book of 5 tickets with the previous 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.)

Applications, with the appropriate fee, had to be into HQ office by 04 January 2019. **The Grand Reunion Weekend is FULLY BOOKED (with a waiting list already in place).**

If you wish to attend the Friday VVIP Reception at Guildford Cathedral please contact HQ office.

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.

WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

GRAND HARBOUR HOTEL, SOUTHAMPTON

14:00 SATURDAY 23 MARCH 2019

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks
2. Apologies for Absence
3. Confirmation of 2018 Minutes
4. Business Arising
5. Trustee & Council Reports
6. Financial Report
7. Report of the Editor of the Association Journal
8. Reports of Committees
 - a. Executive & Finance Committee
 - b. Benevolent Fund Grants Committee
9. Resolutions
 - a. Trustee/Council Resolutions
 - (i) Revision of Constitution
 - b. Branch Resolutions
 - c. Re-election of Honorary Treasurer
10. Any Other Business
11. Date of Next Meeting – March 2020



Remembrances 2018

NORWICH RC CATHEDRAL

Anne Sim



Doing my bit for the Heritage Open Day at St Johns the Baptist RC Cathedral in Norwich. Angie also volunteers as a First Aider. Met lots of lovely people there today.

TRIP TO YPRES – JULY 2018.

Moira Thom

We arrived in Ypres at 18.00hrs on Tuesday 3rd July 2018 after long, eventful and tiring train journeys. Checked in to our hotel, had a refreshing shower and change of clothes appropriate for the Last Post Ceremony.

It was a 10 minute walk from the hotel to the Menin Gate where a very large crowd was already in place. Being short I eventually found a good viewing point at the River Yser, east side of the Menin gate.

19.55hrs the Buglers, volunteers from the local Fire Brigade, arrive and stand ready. They march to the centre of the Hall of Memory at the eastern entrance facing towards the town. 20.00hrs, all fall silent as the flags are lowered and the "Last Post" bugle call. Exhortation, then a minute's silence is observed. Two pipers played a Lament. Then the wreath laying.

Our Association was one of a great number from schools, associations and organisations from throughout Europe, UK and other countries across the world that had Wreath Laying parties. This took some time, but gave me time to reflect that World War was exactly that, it changed lives all over the world. Sounding of the "Reveille" bugle call and the raising of the flags.

The flag party on the night was made up of members of the British Legion and Scouts from Lockerbie. End of Ceremony.

Wednesday 4th July 2018. I visited the Ypres Reservoir Cemetery maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission in memory of 121 Australian, 106 Canadian, 18 New Zealand, 7 South African, 1 Indian and 1,330 from United Kingdom who lost their lives in WW1. Many of the graves were marked "A soldier of the Great War – Known unto God". A most beautiful peaceful place to visit.

I walked back into the centre of Ypres and went into the 'In Flanders Fields Museum' that is situated in 'The Cloth Hall', a very majestic building in the town square. Although there was no time to visit any battlefields, the vast displays, numerous videos, reconstruction of trench warfare etc in the museum gave a very clear idea of what it was like. What stood out from my visit to the museum was a glass cabinet full of items that have been dug up/ found in farm land over the years in the area - buckles, buttons, leather straps, shrapnel and metal from guns, they are part of what was once the uniform and armoury of soldiers who featured in Laurence Binyon's poem, "They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old". These are items stored as a reminder to our generation of the sacrifices those young men gave all those years ago.

Finally, I had a walk out to Rijsels Gate then back in along the River to the Menin Gate. Today Ypres is a city of peace and a place I look forward to visiting again.

BELGIUM REMEMBRANCE

Lyn Wenham

Standard Bearer, Leics/Notts Branch

Friday 24th August 2018 we are off to Belgium on a coach trip organised by Jez and Angie Downie of the Royal British Legion, Thurmaston. Also on the trip from the branch are Vi Rawlings, Chris Gardner and her husband Phil (ex-RAF). Our hotel is just a few minutes' walk from the Menin Gate, Yeper (Ypres).

Saturday we are free, so Vi, Chris, Phil and myself go site-seeing around this beautiful town that was devastated during the war, but rebuilt using as much of the original stone as possible. Our tour of Yeper included the Cloth Hall, Cathedral and Menin Gate, which holds 54,896 names of those that died in the Salient. We then went to St George's Memorial Church - the bells of this church were made in Loughborough, Leicestershire, and put in place this year. We found the ATS Kneeler which was donated by the ATS Association and worked by Joan C McClollan (does anyone know this lady?).



*Vi Rawling with
ATS kneeler
in St George's
Church, Ypres*

There are six Standard Bearers on this trip – 4 RBL, 1 Para and myself. At each cemetery we visited we always started with the Act of Homage.

Sunday we visited Essex Farm Cemetery and advanced dressing station where 1,200 servicemen were buried. It is thought that it was here John McCrae started to write his famous poem "In Flanders Fields". Buried here is one of the youngest servicemen to die, Rifleman Valentine Joe Strudwick, aged 15 years.



On Parade at Essex Farm Cemetery

On to Hooge Crater Cemetery, here Vi and Chris laid crosses in remembrance of all the ladies we have lost from the branch. Time to look around the excellent family-owned museum and a walk around the crater.

Every evening at 2000 hours precisely, the 'Last Post' is sounded – this has happened since 1928 under the imposing arches of the Menin Gate and tonight we are taking part in it. I have taken part before but it never fails to move me. During the ceremony, Vi and Chris laid a WRAC Association wreath in memory of all ATS and WRAC lost over the years.



Last Post at Menin Gate

Monday, we are at Dud Corner Cemetery. The difference here is that it has a rear and two side walls which the others do not have. This is Loos Memorial where there are over 20,600 names engraved of officers and men missing in action, so no known grave. One name is Captain, The Honourable Fergus Bowes-Lyon, brother to the late Queen Mother. Another is that of Rudyard Kipling's son, Jack (John), who had just turned 18 years. Remains of an unidentified Irish Guards Lieutenant found in 1919 and buried in another cemetery were confirmed as Jack's in 1992.

Our last visit on this trip was to Vimy Ridge, situated in Northern France and captured and held by the Canadians, who had carefully planned and rehearsed their attack. It took them four days to capture the ridge at a cost – 3,598 Canadians killed and 7,000 wounded. The most impressive and haunting sculptures of the white marble memorial stands on the highest point on the ridge, Hill 145. This memorial took 11 years to build.

The end of an excellent trip, tomorrow we head home – lots of memories and new friends made.

GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL, LONDON Monday 5th November Penny Muxworthy

Up until a few years ago the Association used to be included in the planting of the Garden of Remembrance at St Paul's Cathedral, but for some reason had been dropped from the invitation list. So, this year I undertook to get the Association re-invited to this event, which for me traditionally kicks off Remembrancetide, as it takes place at the start of Remembrance week.

This Garden of Remembrance (as opposed to the 'Field' at Westminster Abbey) is principally for representatives of the City and Corporation of London, and the over 100 Livery Companies, to honour those who served in various conflicts from among their organisations. Naturally, the Royal British Legion are also present, as were Sharon Baker-Joyce and myself on behalf of the WRAC Association.

Hopefully the Association will now once again receive it's annual invitation to this event.



Royal Hospital Chelsea representatives



Arrival of St Paul's Clergy



Awaiting the start



St Paul's Cathedral 'Garden of Remembrance' - arrival of City Livery Company reps.



Awaiting the start



City Livery Companies etc all in place



Standards' lined up



Lord Mayor of London



Dean of St Paul's



City of London, St Paul's and other representatives' planted crosses



Sharon Baker-Joyce and Penny Muxworthy



Sharon Baker-Joyce and WRAC Association Standard outside St Paul's crypt

FIELD OF REMEMBRANCE Thursday 8TH November 2018 Ali Brown

On a chilly wet morning on 8th November 2018, ten members of the WRAC Association met at the Association plot in the Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey to join hundreds of other regimental representatives in a service of remembrance. It was great to see that our numbers included two members who had seen service in the ATS. As always, Greater London Branch were present, and I want to thank them for their continued support for this event. The morning started with a short service and then on the hour of 11 the Field fell silent to the sound of Big Ben. Following the Service, the walkabout was conducted by HRH Prince Harry who, as always, stopped and spoke to as many people as possible. His attention turned to the "Ladies in Green" and much to our delight he then spent a few minutes chatting to our group. After a few jokes had been exchanged and promises to be more "green" next year, HRH Prince Harry moved on. The WRAC Association always receives a small allocation of tickets for this event. If you are interested in attending this event on 7th November 2019 or indeed any of the Remembrance week events please do get in touch with Association HQ.



The Duke of Sussex



Field of Remembrance, Westminster Abbey



Christine Barnwell at Field of Remembrance



*WRAC Association ladies meeting
HRH The Duke of Sussex*



*HRH The Duke of Sussex at the Field of Remembrance
2018*



HRH The Duke of Sussex with Betty Herschel ATS



HRH The Duke of Sussex at the Field of Remembrance 2018



Tower of London



Field of Remembrance

CENOTAPH PARADE 2018 **11th November** **Ali Brown**

The rain had finally stopped so early on 11th November, the move towards Horseguards began. The veterans moved by cab, train, car and by walking and from 0900 onwards nearly 100 members of the WRAC Association started to converge on the area marked B. As the numbers gathered the excitement started to build. We started to form up and it was a startling moment to realise that we only had 1 member of the ATS with us, Betty Herschel. We so missed the group of remarkable ATS ladies that had marched with the contingent for many years. Within the contingent this year we had many people who were marching for the first time which was great to see. Once formed up we moved through the arch onto Whitehall, turned left and marched towards Trafalgar Square. As ever the crowds clapped and cheered our arrival and we settled to wait for the start of the Service.

At 1100 bang on the chimes of Big Ben, the Service began although due to our position it was difficult to hear. However we sang the hymns when we could and heard the National Anthem marking the beginning of the March. We watched the heads in front of us starting to move and then it was our turn and the contingent was moving swiftly and smartly down Whitehall, led by Lt Col Rowena Griffiths MBE. We passed the Cenotaph and the Memorial to the Women who served in World War 2 and wreaths were laid for the WRAC Association, the ATS and also for the Women's Land Army and the Women's Timber Corps.

The crowds were amazing, as ever, and all along the route there was cheering and clapping and, in no time at all, we did an eyes right to the Saluting Dias on which stood HRH Princess Anne, and halted back on Horseguards. The whole event was just brilliant and a real honour to have been part of.

This is a fabulous event that is open to any member of the Association. The WRAC Association always receives an allocation of tickets for this event. If you are interested in attending on 10th November 2019 please do get in touch with Association HQ.



Mary Woollard MBE - Women's Land Army and Timber Corps Wreath



L-R: Ali Brown, Betty Herschel ATS, Lynda Armstrong - ATS Wreath

A MORNING OF REFLECTIONS AND SHADOWS

11th November
Carol Traynor

The Cenotaph Remembrance Parade is always a very thought-provoking event to take part in, and this year more than ever with it being the 100 year anniversary of the end of the First World War.

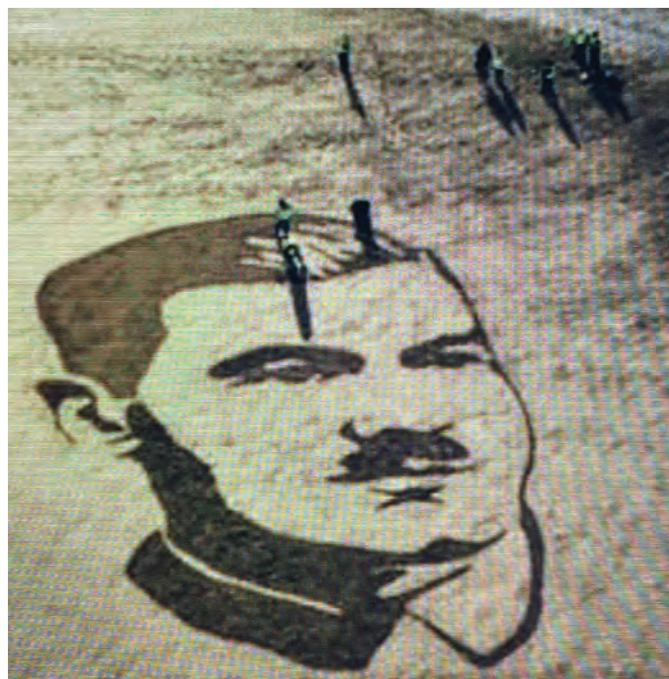
The scene was beautiful as everyone lined up on Horseguards Parade ground, the coloured autumn leaves falling from the trees in St James Park, and the bright sun casting long shadows from each figure. In Whitehall dark ominous clouds formed ahead of us over the Cenotaph and stayed there for a while, then suddenly the dark clouds cleared, and the sun was full out as we marched forward, to pay our respects to those who gave so much.



REMEMBRANCE DAY AT MABLETHORPE AND POPPY COLLECTING Sylvia Stubbs & Marion King

Although we are a small Seaside town, we all come together to remember.

We started the day with a service and then we marched to the Memorial to the beat of The Air Cadets drums. Next, we went to Sutton on Sea to hold a second service and to watch PAGES OF THE SEA unfold. The portrait chosen for Sutton on Sea depicts LIEUTENANT BASIL PERRIN HICKS who lost his life in the First World War. By 1915 he joined the 8th Battalion Royal Berkshire Regiment. Basil was killed in action on the first day in France at the Battle of Loos. In the evening, another service was held and a Beacon of Light, one of many along our coast line, was lit and we finished the day off singing LAND OF HOPE AND GLORY.



REMEMBRANCE Bury St Edmunds 2018 Wendy Hooton

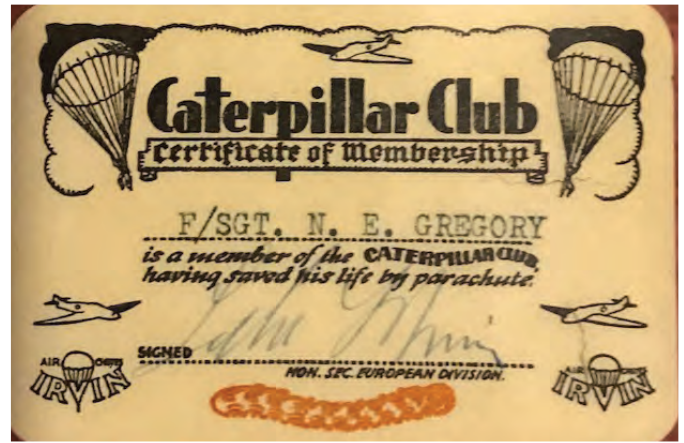
I had the pleasure of marching with Fred Tuck (95yrs) ex Royal Marine Commando. An absolute privilege. Sadly, Fred now suffers from dementia but that didn't stop a lively conversation! I had an Uncle who was also a Royal Marine Commando in WW2.

In the evening I escorted Norman Gregory (96yrs) ex RAF and ex Lancaster Bomb Aimer to light the beacon at Great Welnetham just outside Bury St Edmunds. Beacons were lit all over the country at 7pm to mark the end of WW1. Such an honour.

Norman is a member of the Caterpillar Club, which is a club for people who had to bail out of a plane by parachute and survived. Norman bailed out of a burning Lancaster over Dortmund in Germany and was captured but, has survived to tell the tale. I will add that Norman still cycles 10 miles a day, he is amazing!

These WW2 veterans, men and women, are incredible. We owe them so much, and as Barack Obama said, "All of us can aspire to the courage to put the greater good above our own".

LEST WE FORGET



Caterpillar Club membership



Beacon of Light

EILEEN DOROTHY HAWKINS Jean Farrington

I had been aware of this grave for many years. By chance I went last week to photo it so Lyn Hatch could research her, little was learnt apart from the fact she was only 18 - 75yrs years ago today, so I bought a card and posy of red flowers and put on the grave on the day 28th August saying in the card she has not been forgotten. I thought it only fitting to let people know she has not been forgotten.

The headstone/grave is in the Cambridge City Cemetery away from the other war graves but is looked after by them.



Fred Tuck, ex Royal Marine Commando



Norman Gregory, ex RAF Lancaster bomb aimer

A DAY TO REMEMBER **Mrs Marian Lamberton** **(nee Duckworth, and Tait) ex WRAC**

Sometimes wishes do come true and they certainly did for Mr Ron Wilson, a 94 year old Burma veteran from Ayr. It all started at the 2017 Remembrance Service at Ayr St Andrews where Ron is a popular member. Captain Karen Tait MBE RAMC from Ayr was asked to do a reading and lay the wreath. Afterwards over a cup of tea Ron told Karen how he would love to visit the Commando (Cdo) Memorial at Spean Bridge. Two of Ron's comrades had previously visited and placed a plaque, bearing their and Ron's names in the Garden of Remembrance near the memorial.

So, the plan was hatched. Throughout the year Karen kept in contact with Ron and a few weeks ago she asked him if he would like to visit over the weekend of Remembrance. He couldn't believe that someone would take the trouble to arrange this for him, little did he know exactly what Karen had arranged!!

On the afternoon of Friday 9 November my husband and I drove Ron to the Ben Nevis Hotel, the local haunt of the Cdos and Royal British Legion. After settling in and resting he was greeted in the bar by ex-personnel from 29 Cdo, (he still doesn't know how they knew his name). He then went on to enjoy a 3-course meal and wine courtesy of the hotel.

After an excellent breakfast he was driven the short distance to Spean Bridge. Karen had gone on ahead as she had arranged to meet Mr Paul Wilson, Chairman of the Royal Marine Association, Highland Branch based in Inverness, and Sergeant Major (SM) Buckley (Buckers) 43 Cdo who had driven up from Faslane, complete with wreath.

On being introduced to them Ron was in awe. In the garden of remembrance Ron found the plaque that he had helped fund and had even taken materials to clean it. After looking around the memorial Ron laid the wreath that had been brought for him and said the words of the Kohima Epitaph and the Exhortation.

After visiting the memorial Paul and Buckers took Ron on a local tour of his old training ground and what were his barracks at Achnacarry in 1942. Following this, they showed him around the Cdo Museum at the Spean Bridge Hotel and also had lunch with him, Karen and her accomplices.

Lunch concluded, Buckers explained that the Commanding Officer of 43 Cdo had asked him to present a 43 Cdo silk tie to Ron, something reserved for distinguished guests and visitors.

Although elated by his two days experiences, we drove a tired Ron back to his home in Ayr. He couldn't thank Karen enough for what she had done for him. But Karen not only carries out her role as a serving officer in the Royal Army Medical Corps, she is "Head of Delivery" for Families' Activity Breaks (FAB). www.fabcamps.org.uk, which is a non-public funded, tri-service charity providing fun and challenging activity camps around the UK for bereaved Military families. She gives up a lot of her spare time and annual leave to help others, so doing this for Ron was just another selfless gesture. She says about the day, "It's not always about remembering those who have fallen, it's about remembering those who made it through and live with the memories of who they left behind. It was a privilege to stand with Mr Ron Wilson, 44 Cdo and SM Buckley 43 Cdo and remember our loved ones whilst supporting one of our own."

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.



L-R: Capt Karen Tait MBE RAMC, Mr Ron Wilson ex 44 Commando, SM Buckley 43 Commando, Marion Lamberton (nee Tait)

EVENTS DIARY

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	DETAILS
2019			
FEBRUARY 1 ST	Attended Evensong	Guildford Cathedral	Service to commemorate 70th anniversary of WRAC formation, and to launch WRAC Association Centenary celebrations
MARCH 2 ND	'Women and the Army'	National Army Museum, London	10.00 – 16.30. Free Includes 5 x 15-minute presentations (4 nominated by WRAC Association) and Association will have Information Stand.
	Marg Davies 100-mile walk	Surrey to Southampton	All details still TBC
MARCH 22 ND - 24 TH	Grand Reunion (including AGM)	Southampton	
JUNE 27 TH - 29 TH	National Armed Forces Day	Salisbury	
JULY – OCTOBER	WRAC Centenary Exhibition	National Army Museum	A special exhibition of WRAC Association artefacts and information from the items gifted to the Museum in 1992.
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	
8 TH	Lord Mayor's Show	City of London	
8 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 LIONESSES 7th ANNUAL 10k Run

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”

PLANNING FOR OUR CENTENARY A YEAR OF CELEBRATION IN 2019



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 2019 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.



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 resulted in the wonderful news they are 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 took place at RMA Sandhurst, towards the documentary film, which included 6 female officer-cadets and was launched on 1st February after Evensong at Guildford Cathedral. 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, 27th -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 shared when confirmed

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.

Memorabilia – see page within this Lioness. A selection of items have been commissioned with the Centenary branding and are 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 be shared as known.

PUBLICITY/MEDIA

National media coverage - hopefully TV, radio and printed press. Other Communications - Branches and Areas consider how you 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 now underway and with the start of the new year so planning for a series of special events is well in hand. By way of reminder, 2019 is a very important year for the WRAC Association since 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.

Therefore, it is these anniversaries that we will be celebrating this year, while also commemorating all those who have gone before. In addition to the Grand Reunion, we also have some more events planned:

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

Guildford Cathedral, the Association's 'Mother Church' invited us to attend Choral Evensong on the 70th anniversary date of the formation of the WRAC – Friday 1st February 2019. The service started at 17.30 and included the Cathedral Choir, a procession of our Standards and participation by Rev Sue Wing, Ali Brown and Wendy Hooton. We were additionally joined by local civic representatives along with the AofWRNS. The service was followed by a Reception in Season's Café at the Cathedral and included the launch of the WRAC Association Wonderful Women documentary film.

A full report will appear in the next edition.

MARCH 2nd 2019 – 'Women and the Army' workshop, National Army Museum

Discover how women have helped shape the British Army with a day of performances, music and talks. As part of Women's History Month, join us for a day of activities looking at the life of women in the Army at different points in time.

Talks: Hear first-hand accounts from current and former female soldiers (mainly sourced by/through the WRAC Association) as they share their personal experiences of the British Army.

Music: Listen to performances from the Military Wives Choirs, made up of women in the military community who join together to sing, share and support one another.

Step back in time: Hear the story of Mother Ross, who disguised herself as a man to enlist in the Army in the 17th century. Join her on an adventure to find her husband in this family-friendly performance. Then, learn what life was like for women in the Army during the Second World War by putting your questions to a soldier of the Auxiliary Territorial Service.

Explore further: Discover the collection with themed gallery tours and object-handling sessions. We, the WRAC Association, will also have a small promotional and information table at the museum.

Admission details: Museum open 10.00 to 16.30. Suitable for all ages. Free of charge. No booking required. More information available from: nam.ac.uk, or telephone 020 7730 0717.

MARCH 22 – 24TH 2019 Grand Reunion, Southampton

See separate information.

Spaces for the whole Weekend are all fully booked (with a waiting list).

If you would like to attend the Friday afternoon/evening VVIP Reception at Guildford Cathedral, please contact Tanya in the office as soon as possible.

JULY - OCTOBER 2019 – WRAC Association Centenary Exhibition, National Army Museum

The National Army Museum have told us they plan to mark the Association's Centenary with a special exhibition in one of their dedicated exhibition spaces celebrating all the achievements of women in the army, from the QMAAC to current day, through the times and recollections of the WRAC Association.

This special exhibition is being staged by the National Army Museum at their Chelsea address. The exhibition will include artefacts from the items we gifted to the Museum in the 1990's and chart the similarities and differences between the achievements of women in the army and society.

We are very grateful to the NAM for helping us to celebrate our centenary in this way. There will be opportunities for Members, friends and families to view some of the WRAC's museum materials, whether as part of the exhibition or as part of a special visit that your branch or area may organise to the museum. The exhibition will also be promoted to families and schools as part of their Engagement Programme.

JULY 5TH 2019

Opening of the WRAC Association Centenary Exhibition, National Army Museum. Full details still to be announced by the Museum but likely to include Association representation.

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

The Association Plinth is being re-engraved to acknowledge the Association's Centenary. The re-dedication of this has been booked for Sunday 7th July at the NMA – probably 14.00 start, with a format similar to the 2018 ATS event. The formal ceremony will be followed by Afternoon tea 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.

NOVEMBER 10th 2019 – Remembrancetide

We hope to be part of the Garden of Remembrance at St Paul's Cathedral, London, on Monday 4th November. We will definitely be part of the Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey on Thursday 7th November. In honour of the Association's Centenary, and the very close links we have with Guildford, we would like to focus our Remembrance commemorations on Guildford and join them for the events they will organise, but will still have representation at the Cenotaph, London.

More details will follow in due course but if you would like to be considered for any of these events please contact the Association Office.

**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

New suggestions this edition:

National Army Museum – make a visit! Go see the special exhibition being mounted to celebrate the WRAC Association Centenary. This is being staged in a special exhibition space/room and will mark the special events in the Association's history along with how they reflected or prompted similar ones in society.

Plant-a-Tree. Just as society and Association members erected memorial benches to the ladies of the ATS, now you can plant a Memorial Tree. National Tree Week is end November/beginning December and participation by groups and individuals is actively encouraged. To find out more about how you, your Branch and/or Area can get involved contact your Local Authority – usually either the Environment, Planning or Parks departments, OR go to the Tree Council website (<https://www.treecouncil.org.uk/Take-Part/National-Tree-Week>), Take Part page, which will direct to your local Tree Warden. If we can plant at least 100 trees (one for every year of the Association's existence) across the country this will leave a long-term memorial to all those who served over the years.

For any of you who listen to BBC Radio 2, try and get a mention on the Breakfast Show's "I/we are on our way" slot – on your way to Grand Reunion, National Army Museum, Armed Forces Day (locally, regionally or nationally), National Memorial Arboretum, Remembrancetide events, etc. Your local radio stations are usually eager for news of what local residents are up to – so make use of the pro-forma press releases we send out to Branches and Areas.

As An Individual

Visit National Army Museum – for 2nd March 'Women in the Army' Day and/or during July-October WRAC Association Exhibition

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 broach 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

Plant-a-Tree – contact your Local Authority, local Forestry Commission and/or local Woodland Trust warden for information on when (Plant-a-tree week end of November / early December 2019), how, etc.

Visit National Army Museum – Organise a Branch visit to 2nd March 'Women in the Army' Day and/or during July-October WRAC Association Exhibition

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

As A Branch (continued)

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
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.*

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 financial year 1 October 2017 – 30 September 2018 the ATS & WRAC Association Benevolent Fund received 269 applications for assistance from former ATS and WRAC servicewomen and awarded just over £167,713 in one-off grants and care home fee top-ups and a further £50,912 in annual maintenance grants. This does not include the sum distributed on behalf of the ABF, which was £13,542. The oldest beneficiary was 105 and the youngest 43 and applications were received from as far afield as the Republic of Ireland, USA, Canada and Zimbabwe.

In all, grants were awarded in 26 categories, the most common of which were PRMF maintenance grants, debt, assistance with funeral expenses, Nursing Home Fee top-ups and electrically powered vehicles.

In the first 3 months of this financial year, October 2018 – December 2018 inclusive, your Benevolent Fund has received 77 applications and awarded £58,453 on one-off grants and nursing home fee top-ups and a further £28,790 in annual maintenance grants.

The introduction of the new grant giving database, Salesforce, was completed last year; providing a secure and supported means for holding data on our beneficiaries. During the next year further work will be done to make maximum use of Salesforce's reporting functions to provide real time business management information to Trustees.

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.

'To everyone who has helped to support me. I received a Christmas present of £70 and £40 per week from you until 30th Sept 2019. This has, and will, make a huge difference to my life. It means I can pay my rent and bills and still have enough money to buy food. Thank you for your help and support.' £40 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 repairs
house adaptations	central heating/boilers
electrically powered vehicles	carpets and flooring
electric wheelchairs	clothing
riser-recliner chairs	furniture
stairlifts	white goods
disability aids including electric beds	removal expenses
annual maintenance grants	rent, deposits and bonds
care home fee top-ups	funeral expenses
general needs	priority debt
respite breaks	food vouchers
travel and transport	

Is there anything with which your Benevolent Fund cannot help?

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

So how do you apply for help?

If you are a former ATS or WRAC regular or TA servicewoman who needs assistance, or if you know someone who is, then your first port of call is your local branch of ssafa or regional RBL office.

ssafa or the RBL will arrange for a trained caseworker to interview you in your home to establish the full range of assistance that you need.

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

When the report is complete it is sent to the Benevolent Fund Secretary.

Once received, applications are considered at the appropriate grants committee meeting and a decision is taken.

A ssafa caseworker writes, 'This is fantastic news. I am meeting with Mrs ?? this afternoon so I will inform her then, I am sure she will be over the moon. I send my personal thanks to yourself and the trustees for this kind gesture and decision. This will greatly lift Mrs ?? low mood.' £40 per week PRMF annual maintenance payment.

ASSOCIATION VISION STATEMENT AND STRAPLINE

Association Vision Statement

To be a recognised and accessible charity providing support for women who have served in the ATS, ATS TA, WRAC, WRAC TA and WRAC TAVR, to which our members are proud to belong.

Trustees Vision Statement: *To be an effective Board of Trustees who deliver the Charity's vision both now and in the future.*

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 express my gratitude in receiving your assistance to rebuild my life here in Scotland. I'm at peace with some of my financial worries. Thanks for your support in this matter, my entire perspective is looking a lot more promising. ... I'm deeply touched and grateful for your support and understanding. The key role you played possibly helped save my life." Approx £700 priority debt, £220 training costs and £850 household goods.

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

DMWS

Meeting the specific needs of female soldiers and veterans of all ages

The St John and Red Cross Defence Medical Welfare Service (DMWS) has been providing a person-centred medical welfare service to the Armed Forces Community since 1943. In that time they have supported over 1,000,000 patients and their families, ensuring that no one goes through the worry of injury and illness alone. Their highly trained welfare officers provide practical and emotional support to those receiving medical treatment.

The benefits of providing additional welfare support to the Armed Forces community has been recognised, and the DMWS service is available in hospitals and recovery centres across the UK, Germany and Cyprus for the serving community, and across the UK for veterans and their families. DMWS aims to improve mental wellbeing, encourage a positive approach to treatment and recovery, and promote independence, achieving better outcomes for those we support.

Female veterans, and women who are currently serving, say they feel neglected, especially when it comes to support of female related health issues. Support for serving and ex-forces women who are diagnosed with cancer and other long-term or life-threatening health conditions, can be particularly complex. In 2017 Forward Assist also identified that a much smaller proportion of female veterans access mental health support than their male counterparts - mental health support is a key area for DMWS welfare officers, all of whom gain a Level 3 Diploma in Welfare Studies and are qualified in Mental Health First Aid.

For more information on how DMWS might be able to help you please visit www.dmws.org.uk or call their Helpline on 0800-999-3697. They are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Christine Pilbeam

Marketing & PR Manager, DMWS

VETERANS UK

Another good source of information on a variety of issues and subjects relating to veterans is the Veterans UK website (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/veterans-uk>). They can help with War Pensions, Service Records and Medals enquiries, among other things. So, if you, or someone you know, have any queries please do contact them.

Although we are the WRAC Association, we only hold records on our current Members, and this does not include past service records. Telephone: 0808-1914-218 (there is a different number if calling from overseas). Email: veterans-uk@mod.uk.

Information on the RBL and SSAFA will appear in future Lioness editions.

WHAT DOES BEING A MEMBER OF A BRANCH MEAN?

Ali Brown



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. All Branches 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".

Supporting Women who Served

NATIONAL & OVERSEAS

BAND

**Carol Tyler (nee Tupling)
Chair of Grimsby branch**

I would like, on behalf of the Band branch, to say a big THANK YOU to Ann Jones for all the work she has done over the many years as Secretary of the Band branch. Without her there would not have been the Band branch reunions for us all to enjoy and also the newsletters and Christmas cards sent to us every year.

She has asked on many occasions if any of the younger members of the branch would take over the job as secretary, but nobody has contacted her. Due to ill health and her age, she is finally giving up being secretary.

In October 2018, Anne Jones, Sheila Burton and Betty Cleark came to visit me in Lincolnshire. Ann Jones' sister did the driving – covering many miles. Anne from Bristol, Sheila from Torquay and Betty from Tewksbury. It was lovely to see them all, as we all served together in 1957, 1958, onwards. We had lots to talk about and a lot of memories.

In a way it was sad as I doubt that we will ever meet up again, but that won't stop us telephoning and emailing – as we have always done.

Good luck and Good health for the future Ann, and many, many thanks for all you have done for the Band branch.



Ann Jones (Hiscox), Betty Clark (Chadwick), Carole Tyler (Tupling), Sheila Burton (Huxley)

MEDITERRANEAN Ann Oldfield

Following the Benidorm Babes, it has been quite quiet over here. Mel has been on her usual jaunts over to the UK and supported Shropshire Branch in a few of their events as well as Chester Branch's annual lunch on the canal which she loves. Apart from that, I went along with Mel to the Dinner Club where great fun was had by all.

Ann Colclough represented Med Branch at the NMA for Remembrance, whereas I attended the Remembrance Service here in Benidorm. Mel went as usual to the Cenotaph and the Field of Remembrance where she shook hands with

Prince Harry who commended her colourful hair, but said that he would like to see it green next year!!!! Pat Rosewell, known to us all as Budgie, was asked where her green was and replied she was wearing green knickers. Prince Harry thought he had misheard and asked her to repeat it and then said "you must get yourselves together next year". Budgie with her green knickers on the outside and Mel with green hair, Mmmm watch this space. Ali Brown, who I believe stood next to them, was having palpitations!!!! Of course it made the front page of the Benidorm post, unbeknown to Mel. She was mortified when it was reported that she was a member of the Women's Royal NAVY Association; how very dare they!



Benidorm Babes will not take place in 2019. I believe Mel is sorting something for 2020 which will include a trip to Benidorm for a couple of days and then to Ibiza for a week, so watch out for an announcement.

GRIFFIN BRANCH Cathy Munro

Another busy six months for the Team at Griffin Branch, as word gets out, we are going from strength to strength. We now stand at over four hundred members, from as far afield as the United Arab Emirates, Canada, USA, South Africa and even Preston North End. The world is, truly our oyster.

Recent interactions in this group have joined together countless like-minded WRAC and ATS Veterans. New friendships forged, resulting in not only mini reunions, but also the creation of new Branches. A simple "Thread" asking which county people lived in, evolved into conversations such as "you only live ten minutes from me", "Wow, I used to live there" and "I am not too far away, fancy meeting up for a coffee?" Over one thousand responses meant that many ladies who would not normally have the chance to talk or meet – did just that, both virtually and in person. The results were phenomenal and before we knew it, not only were people taking the plunge and joining existing branches, attending Association Events, there was also talk of forming new branches. The excitement and enthusiasm were a joy to watch unfold.

Manchester Branch evolved, led by the willing and able Pip Flegel, Jañ Brant Cassidy and of course our lovable EWOK, we were up and running. Meeting every month at the Veteran's Garage in Eccles, there is no stopping them now. Northern Tea and Bacon Butties now the order of the day, what more could you ask for?

Spurred on by this success, others came forward, Christine Barnwell offering to reopen the Luton Branch, and talk of the

Suffolk Branch being re-formed, enquiries as to new Welsh Branches.

Facebook, whilst it can have its negatives, there is no denying that it can when used properly bring people together. The Griffin Branch have reached out to so many and helped bring them home.

On a sad note, we lost one of our founder members. Eileen Hobson, joined the WRAC at the tender age of eighteen, serving a varied career reaching the rank of Warrant Officer before having to medically retire. Eileen and her beloved Assistance Dog Sailor, were stalwarts of the group, never tiring, always encouraging, a fabulous friend to so many. Eileen who will be laid to rest in Shepherds Bush, will be remembered by so many. Stand Down Ma'am, your duty Done.



Eileen Hobson and Sailor



Manchester Branch

POSTAL & COURIER Margaret Grant

Our 30th Reunion and final weekend was held at Nottingham from the 18th to the 22nd October 2018. We all had a great time and the accommodation, meals and service were very good. The staff were most helpful and kind.

At our special dinner on the Saturday evening I was presented with a gold necklace bearing 2 hearts from all the members as this was our final reunion. I also received many individual gifts.

It was a sad occasion but many of us will keep in touch by my website and phone and other reunions. The weather kept good as usual for the reunions.



Margaret Grant MBE with presentation gift and card signed by all



*Front row L-R Margaret Smith, Margaret Grant. MBE, Sylvia Knowles
Middle Row L-R Isobel Duffy, Isabel Bodman, Pam Sussex, Brenda Griffiths
Rear Row L-R Debbie Davies, Chris Fretwell, Val Hicks, Maggie Watt, Jean Legg, Margaret Moule, Ella Reast, Pat Carter, Pat Gray, Dorron Phillipson.*



The 3 Members who have attended all of the 30 reunions.

SOUTH & SOUTH WEST

BRISTOL Judith Stinchcombe

It's good news all the way. Membership of the Branch is growing. It has been such a busy summer, getting involved in both national and local events has been energising. Our monthly informal lunches and days out are proving ever more popular and it's good to see more and more that members want to come together and socialise. The support for one another within the group is excellent and we will be looking to expand on this support in the coming year, with home visits to those that cannot always come out to the branch meetings, due to various health issues.

A first experience for some was a trip to the Dinner Club in Dudley, including myself. It was a very relaxing and well organised weekend complete with 'fairies', which was brilliant!



The Remembrance Sunday was well represented by the branch in a number of regions namely Bristol, Weston Super Mare and London. We are fortunate to have a TRBL area poppy organiser amongst our number and we were kept well informed about the area activities. The sun shone on a crisp Sunday morning (17th November) as branch members were warmly welcomed to the Commemoration with Patchway TRBL in Bristol. They traditionally celebrate the Remembrance a week later. Something that has happened for a number of years. It was fabulous to see so many young people taking part from the local community.

Interaction also continues at the Weston-super-Mare breakfast club, where a Christmas meal is included as per the usual

tradition. More fun and banter will be extended to family members who will join the meal. One of our members attended a funeral in November, where the widow had requested military support. She was concerned her husband would not be represented as it had been many years since he had left the Forces. The turnout was excellent.

The Branch has recently received an invitation to join the Armed Forces Community Covenant Steering Group in Bristol. We are looking forward to working with them on local projects.

The programme for 2019 is already looking busy. The branch celebrates its own anniversary in June, and we are looking to include WRAC100 into it. We hope that many of you will be able to join us.

ISLE OF WIGHT Tracy Biddlecombe

Oops! apologies, for missing the deadline for including an article from the IoW ATS/WRAC Informal Group in the last edition of the Lioness. I still feel a bit new to all this and am still finding my way.

As you will see from the last edition of the Lioness magazine (Col Ali. Brown article, page 1), 'WRAC Association Council have now have decided to remove the division between 'formal and informal branches' and all will now be known as Branches of the WRAC Association, as all are representative of those who served in the ATS and WRAC'. As a consequence of this change we are now officially called the IoW Branch (albeit more of a twig than a branch at this stage of our group's development).

Our group has now been meeting for 2 years and continues to meet approximately bi-monthly for social get togethers. We are a small group, but whilst struggling with numbers and attracting new members, with only 12 registered ATS/WRAC members in total living on the IoW, the time we share together is valued and enjoyed by folk.

The installation of a new ATS memorial bench at St James Church, Yarmouth has now finally taken place and a dedication service was kindly led by Rev Richard, Associate priest of St James church, Yarmouth. The bench was jointly paid for by one of our members Shirley Reynolds, together with a kind donation from the WRAC Association. Shirley is our oldest member, age 98yrs (see pictured below) and ex-ATS, but still able to stand to attention without any prompting - marvellous! We all then went for cake and a cuppa afterwards at a local tea shop nearby(pictured below).



New replacement ATS Memorial Bench with parishioner Mrs Shirley Reynolds.



IoW WRACATS Goup - new ATS Memorial bench installed at St James Church, Yarmouth

In June 2018 I attended the IoW armed forces day and was able to network and meet one or two other ex-WRAC ladies for the first time and share in chat/coffee. It was great to meet you all and I hope you are managing to receive my emails ok about our IoW branch events. Well done to all those servicemen and women who managed to keep their tents, stalls and tables up on a very gusty Sandown seafront especially at high tide!

We met in October 2018 for coffee/chat at a café in Newport after the summer break, and four members attended.



IoW WRACATS Group - social get together afternoon tea.

A few of us from IoW Branch hope to attend the WRAC Association Centenary Year Grand Re-Union 2019 in Southampton taking place on 22nd March - 24th March 2019. So if you are living on the IoW and are ex-WRAC/ATA and would like to join us for the reunion or any other event please get in touch with me for further details. All welcome

PORTSMOUTH Val Duke

The Portsmouth Branch continues to meet at the Maritime Club, Portsmouth, at 10:30 on the first Saturday of the month. The Club has excellent road, rail and ferry links making it an ideal location. We have a regular 8-10 members attending monthly meetings and over the past few months two new members, Jessica Cliff & Lorraine Lennox, have joined. We were pleased to see Rose again; she had been unwell for a while and not able to come. Also, we welcomed Tracy who joined us from the Isle of Wight Branch. We discussed with enthusiasm the 100 reunion which most of us hope to be able to attend. We had an interesting talk by Deane Deakins from Age UK who gave useful information

and contact numbers for Veterans needing support.

The outing to Bletchley Park went ahead in September as planned and an enjoyable experience was had by all. Looking at the listed mansion today it's hard to imagine that around 8,000 ladies worked there.



One of the many offices at Bletchley Park

In October several members attended the laying of a commemorative corner stone in honour of Lieutenant Robert Gorle of the Royal Field Artillery who was awarded the VC during WWI.

Our Branch was well represented at the Remembrance Service with 6 of our regulars in attendance. Our Standard was paraded by Sally, and the wreath laid by Phyllis. Afterwards a luncheon was enjoyed at the Lady Hamilton, a popular venue with our ladies after Branch meetings.

Finally, I would like to thank Phyllis and Sally for 'holding the fort' in the absence of a Chair.

SOUTHAMPTON

Jean Doe

Hello everyone!

Well, what a summer! We really had sun, didn't we – hope you enjoyed it, for me it was too much.

Armed Forces Day, 22nd June, was another scorcher but Babs and I went to Gang Waniy at Blachfield (near Fawley) where they laid on a very full programme. This was very well attended despite the heat. Babs and I went to the local British Legion

for lunch, which was packed, but made us welcome. We went back to Gang Waniy after to wait the Spitfire fly-past – in all a pretty good day!

Later on Stephanie was successful in getting a minibus and we went to Portsmouth and a visit to their D-Day Centre – this was very successful and much enjoyed by everyone, so much to see. Being a hungry lot, we had an early lunch at Mother Kelly's Fish and Chips, which is a pretty good stop!

Despite falling numbers, we keep going. We do have some fantastic ladies and on Jan. 30th the minibus is booked, and we hope to go to Rosebourne Garden Centre – a garden centre with a difference ... a big difference!

To you all a healthy, happy New Year. 2019 looks a busy year – let's keep it growing.

LONDON & SOUTH EAST

Nina Smith

Over the last few months I have gone around the branches and seen the members at Canterbury, Worthing and Greater London. I have enjoyed meeting you all and hope to come and see you again in the New Year as well as Maidstone Invicta & London.

I have seen all the hard work that the branches have done in ensuring that the members within their branch are kept informed of what is going on within the branch, local area and other veteran meeting groups.

We have a great support network and throughout 2018 the ladies have met up on a regular basis and have given support to those who have been ill and also support to relatives of those members we have lost. For this I thank you.

In November I held an Area Reunion and I would like to thank all the ladies who came, it was greatly appreciated by me. The Afternoon Tea was held at the Guildford Harbour Hotel and we were joined by Marjorie Cole and Charmaine Coleman of Royal Hospital Chelsea and Ali Brown. A raffle was held and we managed to raise £46 for the association.

In October a number of ladies travelled up to the Black Country for the Dinner Club, and I have been reliably informed a good time was had by all.

Everyone who marched was well wrapped up as it was a long cold day for everyone on parade. The crowds were big as always and the warmth that was received by the marching veterans as always is moving for all including those of us who watched. I had planned to join them up at a pub in Leicester Square, however due to the 10,000 'peoples march' that happened directly afterwards, this wasn't possible, so myself and a few of the Gtr. London branch ended up in the Civil Service Club, after being trapped by various crowds at different points on getting there. We were later joined by a group of ladies from Birmingham. We had a lovely afternoon/evening at the club.

I would like to say a big thank you to all the ladies within this area for giving me support throughout 2018 and hope that I see more of you in 2019.

CANTERBURY

Jenny Smith

As the dark nights are upon us once again it is good to reflect on our beautiful, glorious and sometimes very hot summer days that now seem so far away.

In September our annual outing this summer was a boat trip at Grove Ferry which was very well attended and a great success due to the careful planning from Susan our Chair. The Captain was very entertaining and kept us well informed of current and past issues on the local waterways. Although the weather was overcast we were actually able to see a lot more than we would have in the dazzling sunshine and of course the swans were majestic. The trip started and finished at the Grove Ferry Inn where there was ample free parking and we ended the afternoon with a welcome cuppa and refreshments.

October was our Branch AGM, Nina our Area Coordinator, was able to join us and brought us up to date with news from HQ. It was good to meet her and hear her future plans for our area.

May the winter months be kind to us all and 2019 be our best year ever.

GREATER LONDON

Chrissie Mills

Our AGM was held in September and Val Gaff, our former secretary/treasurer and generally one-woman band, was elected as Chairman to take over from Virginia Hopson who had resigned earlier in the year.

Many of us took part in the commemorations to mark the centenary of the Armistice, and some of the ladies who attended the Field of Remembrance were delighted to have the chance to speak to Prince Harry.

Five of us were joined by Nina Smith, our Area Co-ordinator, at the Service of Thanksgiving at Westminster Abbey. Afterwards we intended to go on to a watering hole in Leicester Square to meet up with the ladies who were marching. The idea didn't work because we became trapped in the crowds, which luckily for us meant we were able to see the Lionesses on parade. We gave up on Plan A and instead decided on Plan B, having refreshments in the Civil Service Club where we met girls from the Birmingham branch. The short stay turned into a longer one fuelled by several rounds including a couple bought for us by other ex-military veterans. All-in-all it ended up as a very poignant though memorable day.

Nina organised a lovely afternoon tea for the London and South East Area in a hotel in Guildford and had obviously put a lot of hard work into it. Thank you very much, Nina, it was great!

WORTHING

Jackie Bentley

This has not been an easy branch article to write. These past few months have seen many happy times but last month not so. It is with great sadness that I have to tell you that we've said a final farewell to one of our much-loved branch members, Maggie Costan, after a courageous battle with a serious illness. In my last article recently published, I mentioned the enormous contribution both Maggie and her sister Jan made to the branch. Throughout her struggle with disability and illness Maggie never

let us down, she always turned up no matter how poorly she felt and her sister Jan is very much the same. Maggie, our lovely friend, we will miss you so much and you will never ever be forgotten.



Maggie Costan

At our AGM in October we voted in Janet McKechnie as our new Branch Secretary to replace Janet Goldsbrough-Jones who, after 11 years, has stood down from the post. As a token of our appreciation for her 11 years as Branch Secretary and indeed as our Branch Founder we presented Janet Goldsbrough-Jones with a silver fob watch.

Back in July I 'Braved the Shave' for Macmillan Cancer Support witnessed by a few of our branch members who also donated very generously. The total raised was £235 so well worth the baldness!



Jackie 'braving the shave' for Macmillan Cancer Support



WALES & WEST

Babs Anderson

Shenanigans in Wales and the West Area continue as they always ever did. There are very few days in a month when some meeting or another isn't happening.

Our newer Branches, Gloucester and Colwyn Bay, are developing nicely and drawing in new members all the time. As is usual in this Area, members of other Branches turn up to swell the numbers sometimes and you can feel the love. There is even talk of another group forming and meeting for coffee and a chat. The more gatherings, the merrier.

Christmas has seen many Branches interacting and coming together to celebrate the festive season. The camaraderie is visible throughout, manifesting itself in the laughter and barrack room banter we all indulged in when we served. Happy days.

BIRMINGHAM

Babs Anderson

Well, where does the time go? It only seems like a couple of weeks since we last chatted and here we are again.

Here in Brum Branch we have been super careful with our members and not lost a single one. However, we discovered that Irene Oliver took herself off to the big parade square in the sky 2 years ago and her family only thought to tell us when they discovered her WRAC memorabilia recently. Please ask your family to inform us as you take that last inevitable posting so that we can join you on your parade. Just don't do it soon.

As predicted, 6 Brum Branch completed the Norwich 10k Run and many of the Branch were there supporting all-round the course. We survived with no injuries but needed plenty of fluids after the hottest day of the year - again! The whole weekend was a joy, except for the aching muscles, but we weren't put off as we all plan to do it again with 100 comrades in York next August. Get sponsoring.

Brum Branch continues to meet up every 3 months for Pizza Night. We always enjoy the meal, the chat and the laughter but we really, really enjoy the discount of 41% we are given, thanks to the Defence Discount Services Card. Have you got yours?

In September a bunch of us treated ourselves to another lunch and theatre trip. We saw Saturday Night Fever and enjoyed helping out with the singing. It was a lovely production and we all loved it.

Next on our busy schedule was the WRAC Dinner Club. There was a big turn out from Brum Branch as usual, with it being virtually a home game for us. We are all looking forward to next year and a visit to a new venue.

We have taken up a new hobby in our Branch - Tenpin Bowling. We tried it out and enjoyed ourselves so much that we are going to do it again in February.



"Bowling can't be done without a nice brew"



Bowling team lunch

Members of Birmingham Branch were honoured to take part in the Armistice Parade at the Cenotaph in London. The serious matter of Remembrance is always balanced out with the comradeship and banter between our ladies and the members of other Associations and organisations, followed by an afternoon and evening spent with pals. Next year is going to be special and we all hope to be lucky enough to take part again.

The end of November usually sees our members and their friends at the National Indoor Arena for the Birmingham International Military Tattoo, and this year was no exception. We were treated to several displays of marching bands, but our favourites were the Austrians, the Polish and the Russians. We are always impressed by tidy dressing. The RAF won the gun run but we suspected they were allowed to win because it is their centenary year. No sour grapes here.

Brum Branch's famous Christmas Jumper Bash was a fabulous success again. It was lovely to be joined by so many of the Area's other Branches. The vast majority of attendees were really happy with their food and the Irish Centre staff had gone over and above with their efforts to make it a special occasion for us. The annual table decorating competition was won by a Christmas hat with a couple of added baubles. Apparently, simple is best. This year we were lucky enough to be joined by the big man, Father Christmas. Many of the girls (and John Dolphin) took the opportunity to tell him that they had been good all year and he pretended to believe them. No doubt their Christmas stockings were the proof of the pudding.



Our schedule is fast filling up for next year already. We start off with the usual pantomime - Oh yes we do; then Sing-a-long-a The Greatest Showman, before we even get into the normal bedlam of WRACland.

Brum Branch wishes everyone a splendid year ahead and we look forward to 2019 with excitement, as we celebrate the 70th Anniversary of the WRAC and the 100th Anniversary of the WRAC Association. Get your dancing shoes on.

CARDIFF Debbie Amphlett

Since the last issue of Lioness, our meetings have struggled for attendees for a number of reasons, such as hectic work lives, the distance some members have to travel to our meetings, and ill health of members or their family. I send best wishes to all of those Cardiff branch members who have been unable to attend our monthly get togethers due to their own illness, or because of illness of their family members. Get well soon all.

We decided not to hold meetings in December 18 and January 19 due the dark nights. The first get together in the new year will be kicked off with a New Year meal, which will be held for the first time on a Saturday lunch time. A full report will hopefully be in the next issue.

In October a number of branch members attended the WRAC Dinner Club and in November some travelled to London to the Parade at the Cenotaph.

I would like to also thank all members who have attended the meetings and given support and advice on the direction the branch should take going forward. The conclusion from our discussions was that, as our members are so widely spread across South Wales, we may not hold the meetings in the same format as previously, and try and hold a few more events, such as

the annual bowling evening, which is always very well attended.

Meetings in the new year will also be held in a different venue, the new venue being The Fox and Hounds, Old Church Road, Whitchurch, Cardiff CF14 1AD. It has an area which can be screened off, which will enable us to hold quiz night, bingo nights etc. It also allows those travelling straight from work to eat prior to the meeting. The Fox and Hounds is only 200 yards from the previous venue and is just over a mile from the Junction 32 of the M4. Event suggestions and help are always welcome.

The Cardiff Branch Facebook group has had a number of new members this year, it would be great to meet you at one or more of the meetings or events. Keep an eye out on the Facebook group for announcements.

The Cardiff branch informal meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month. Future meetings will be held at the Fox and Hounds (details above) unless there is a special event arranged. 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 group.

HEREFORD Lynda Armstrong

The ladies of Hereford Branch WRAC would like to wish you all a Very Happy New year and hope you all had a very nice Christmas. We, as always, have been a very busy Branch, as well as our monthly meeting's we've also been paying visits to other Branch functions in the Wales and West Area.

We began August with The Annual 10km Run/walk this year in Norwich. Quite a few of our Branch participated this year helping to raise funds for The Association.



End of 10k run

As always, and perfectly, organised by Joyce Nicholls, we held our annual picnic in August at Queenswood Park, Hereford. This event always has a great turn out by members of our own Branch plus a few ladies from neighbouring Branches. Our annual picnic photo shows again how a good crowd of us had a great day.

September saw our annual day trip to Weston Super Mare, perfectly arranged again by Miriam Unwin. We had a wonderful lunch at Tiffany's on the pier; we then played a round of Crazy Golf, this year won by the lovely Jane Griffin-Ash. (I'm not saying for one minute there was any conniving going on, but her partner Sean did the calculating of scores for us). This fun day seems to be the start of an annual outing for the Branch, which we all enjoy immensely. We were very lucky with the weather once again; the skies were blue for the duration we were there, which in turn helped our enjoyment of events.



Hereford Branch and friends at 2018 Picnic



Miriam Unwin Sharon Baker-Joyce Jane Griffin Ash and Lynda Armstrong



Jane Griffin-Ash Recieving the winners cup



Sharon & Jo



Lunch in Tiffanys WSM

Sharon Baker-Joyce and Jo Foster paraded our National and Branch Standards at Hereford Cathedral to commemorate The Battle of Britain.

Sharon again paraded our Association Standard in Worcester to honour the fallen soldiers at The Battle of Gheluvelt. A few of us from the Branch were in attendance, Miriam Unwin, Jane Griffin-Ash and I watched a lovely parade and Drumhead Service, made all the better by the glass of port (right place right time) that Miriam and I were given to toast 'The Mercian Regiment.'

A fabulous time was again enjoyed by all that attended Dinner Club 2018. Plenty of fun, frolics and dancing with friends, some not seen since DC 2017. The DC committee again put on a fabulous weekend.

Also, in October Alison Brown, Barbara Davies, Jane Griffin-Ash and myself attended a Service of Remembrance in Worcester. A ceremony organised by the Worcester and Sherwood Foresters Association, to mark the 104th Anniversary of the Battle of Gheluvelt. Sharon Baker-Joyce paraded our National Standard and Alison Brown laid a Wreath on behalf of the Association and Hereford Branch.



Hereford Branch at DC 2018

November brought us Remembrance Sunday where some of our Branch attended The Cenotaph in London, while a few of our members showed their respect in Hereford Town and other local venues.

We sadly lost one of our ladies early November. Mary Daniels had been a member of Hereford Branch WRAC since 1992. Mary joined The WRAC in March 1949 aged 20 and served for 27 years until April 1976. Mary will be sorely missed by all the ladies of the Branch.

We also lost Col Margaret (Gerry) Fahy retd at the end of November. Gerry served from 1941 through till 1977, totalling 36 years. Gerry supported the Branch when she was able and will be missed very much.

By the time this write up has gone to print, a few of our ladies will have attended: Brum Branch, Oxfordshire & Area Branch, Gloucester Branch and The Not Forgotten Association (Worcester) Christmas Lunches. We also have our very own Post Christmas Lunch, plus an ABBA Arrival – Hits of Abba show in January, then Cardiff Branch Post Christmas Lunch in February. All this will then stand us in great stead and readiness for the festivities planned for The Association Centenary 2019.

MARCHES & MID-WALES Elaine Smith

[So here I am, in Newtown Public Library with my laptop next to me unable to access the write-up on it because it won't flaming well work!!!!!! That's the problem with not being on internet from home, you have to travel 10 miles to the nearest computer to download and upload stuff. Typical - it was working fine at home, it is less than 6 months old!!!!!! Shame I didn't put it onto a flash drive at home and just bring that in!

So, I will go home and try again on Monday.

I hate computers.]

[Editor – don't worry Elaine, all safely received. I've printed your first message as I know so many other branch contacts will sympathise and empathise with you.]

Despite all good intentions I failed to get anything to the Lioness for the last issue. Unless I write stuff down whilst it is fresh in my memory it gets forgotten: let's face it, I don't wear a watch, days are all the same to me and I float from month to month. No use asking me what day, date or month it is or setting deadlines. (I have a notebook called "Now where did I put it?", (self-explanatory), but forgot where I put it). So, a bit of plagiarism will help me through.

First things first, our new Secretary Michelle Boyden was appointed in April and has been doing a grand job keeping us all up to date and sending out excellent newsletters (did I mention the plagiarism...thanks Michelle for the newsletter!). It wasn't easy to convince her to take up the appointment, but a lot of flattery helped. Carys Palmer was (gratefully) relieved of the appointment. Due to failing health it is with regret that Irene Hall, one of our well-known members, can no longer join us at any of our meetings and is now living in a Residential Care Home where she is being waited on hand and foot and enjoys having visitors.

So, what have we been doing (quick look at Michelle's newsletter)? Well, we are proud to announce that in June Elizabeth Lawrence (Lizzy) was presented with a BEM by the Lord Lieutenant at Shire Hall in Shrewsbury in recognition of her

services to the Church and local community (you can add OUR recognition of your services to the branch to that too Lizzie!) and Carys made her one of her Exceedingly Good cakes!



**Liz Lawrence and Judith Bradbury admiring
Liz's BEM cake**

In August, on a beautiful warm day, eight of us, including Area stalwarts Maggie Purkis and Babs Anderson, went on a canal boat trip (there would have been nine but Judith Bradbury travelled all the way from Aberystwyth to Welshpool only to fail to find the embarkation point). The boat belonging to the Heulwen Trust in Welshpool operates not on fixed fees but on donations. The Trust provides an easily accessible canal boat for people who would need special facilities such as getting on board by use of a lift. Fortunately for us they had a cancellation which we were able to take advantage of and enjoyed a leisurely float along the canal whilst enjoying a fantastic spread of food (thanks Carys). En route we were boarded by a few hitchhikers who casually waited until they were able to disembark onto a passing leafy branch – but that's what grasshoppers do. Whilst on board there was a Decorated Hat Competition – suggested by Michelle who decided that if we didn't comply then we had to pay a fine (in lieu of the entrance fee). Anyway, we all sort of complied, though Michelle who instigated the competition FAILED to bring a decorated hat and instead paid a forfeit by relating a poem she'd made up whilst wearing a (bought) Tilley hat - which apparently can be eaten by an elephant and will come out the other end without a mark ... or at least without a mark that wouldn't wash off! (Well, elephants don't have teeth do they ... I wonder what a lion would make of it). We were all made to walk the plank ...

WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

CENTENARY COMMEMORATION At NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM



A **Service of Commemoration and Rededicate for the WRAC Association**, will take place on **Sunday 7th July 2019** in the Association Plot at the **National Memorial Arboretum**, Alrewas, Shropshire.

DRAFT programme: 14.00 Service of Commemoration & Rededication
 15.00 Afternoon Tea

Exact start time and programme will be confirmed.

Please use Reply Form, below, to indicate your wish to attend this event. Replies can be sent by post to: Unit 11, Basepoint, 1 Winnall Valley Road, Winchester, SO23 0LD, or by email to: office.manager@wracassociation.org.uk. Replies required by Friday 14th June 2019.

.....

BOOKING FORM for WRAC ASSOCIATION CENTENARY COMMEMORATION/STATUE REDEDICATION

7th July 2019

I wish to attend the WRAC Association Commemoration / Rededication Service, and afternoon tea on Sunday 7th July 2019 at the National Memorial Arboretum, Shropshire:

Surname: Christian Name (known as):

Email:

Tel No:

Address:

..... Post Code:

Dietary Requirements:

Return to: WRAC Association, Unit 11, Basepoint, 1 Winnall Valley Road, Winchester, SO23 0LD by 14th June 2019, or email to office.manager@wracassociation.org.uk

WRAC ASSOCIATION APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Send to:

WRAC Association
Unit 11 Basepoint Business Centre
1 Winnall Valley Road
Winchester
SO23 0LD



I wish to apply for membership of the WRAC Association:

UK Annual Membership: I wish to join the WRAC Association as an Annual Member, I enclose a cheque for £10.	
Overseas Annual Membership: I wish to join the WRAC Association as an Annual Member, I enclose a cheque for £15.00 (Overseas Members are asked to pay an additional £5.00 per year to cover postage of Lioness magazine).	

All cheques must be in **sterling** and made payable to **"WRAC Association"**.
Alternatively, go to our website (www.wracassociation.org) and Join and pay there.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS INCLUDE:

- 2 copies of Lioness magazine per year
- Events, Friendship and Support through network of Branches
- Invitation to WRAC Grand Reunions Association and AGMs
- Notification of WRAC Association events
- Option to apply for tickets to certain non-WRAC Association events (geography and timescales permitting)
- Various updates from Branches, Areas and HQ via letter or email

Please complete this form in **BLOCK LETTERS**

Miss/Mrs/Ms/Other: Surname:

First Names: Known as:

Surname when serving: Date of Birth:

Address for Correspondence:

.....

..... Post Code:

Email: Local Branch: (*)

(*) We encourage branch membership, where possible, as this is where the Association best "Supports Women Who Served" through comradeship, esprit de corps, benevolence, preserving traditions and events. We need your permission to contact your chosen Branch Secretary, so – **I grant permission for WRAC Assoc. HQ to contact the named Branch: Yes NO**

Home Tel: Mobile Tel:

In order to comply the Data Protection Regulations 2018 we require your express permission to contact you in various ways.

Please tick all that apply:

Methods of contact:	Email	YES	NO
	Landline phone	YES	NO
	Mobile phone	YES	NO

Your copy of the *Lioness* magazine will be posted to you unless you advise otherwise.

Signature Date

ATS/WRAC/TAVR Army Number Last Rank Held:
(Present Rank if still serving)

Date of Enrolment: Date of Release:



Wonderful Women



Story Proforma

Tell us your stories, so we can share them with your fellow WRAC Association members and the wider public.

Help us build a library (oral and written) of ATS and WRAC memories and recollections.

First Name

Surname when serving (if different)

Are you a member of the WRAC Association? Yes / No

(Briefly) **Tell us about your service**

Were you ATS? Yes / No Were you WRAC? Yes / No

When did you serve from to

Where did you train?

Where did you serve?

.....

.....

What jobs did you do?

.....

.....

What rank did you reach?

What was your favourite time?

.....

.....

.....

What's your everlasting memory?

.....

.....

.....

Were you the 1st, or last, to do anything? (e.g. to be employed in a particular role, or to serve somewhere, or to play rugby/cricket or the last in a role or at a 'station'; etc)

.....

.....

.....

Contact details for you

Address

Postcode Tel nos.

Date of Birth Email Address



Telling your story

The Association would like to tell your story to the general public. Are you happy for staff from the WRAC HQ and our Public Relations Consultant to make contact with you? Yes / No

Which is your local newspaper? is it Daily / Weekly?

Which are your local TV news programmes (eg BBC South Today / Meridien)?

Which are your local BBC and commercial radio stations?

Are there any other media/news outlets you think we should know of in your locality?

Would you be prepared to be interviewed for the press, radio or TV? Yes / No

Is there anything else you would like to share with us or others?

A copy of this form is also available by email from: office.manager@wracassociation.org.uk

Please be assured that we do not, and will not, share your information or details with anyone without your express permission to do so.

or at least parade our hats down the central isle of the boat then talk about them! There were some interesting stories, Lizzie's hat decorated with rosettes from her horse competitions (she admitted that it was a last minute job!); Carys wore a hat made by herself and her grandchildren out of items from her dressing up box; Babs proudly wore her charity Fun Run baseball cap (what a woman, always doing something for charity and probably the record holder for being in the most photos in the Lioness!); Gillian wore a magnificent hat with photography- and dressmaking-related decorations like bows made from old cine film (they are her hobbies); Deanna proudly sported an Australian Air Force Uniform Hat (she was stationed in Australia in the WRAAF); Maggie wore a hat she called her Ascot hat (what what); and Elaine's straw hat was a representation of her garden and love of nature, animals and apparent self-flagellation (bearing in mind that the teasel flowers and stems are very prickly and the stems poked into the bowl of the hat acting like a crown of thorns), further additions included honeycomb, honeysuckle, (stray cat hairs), herbs, flowers, grasses, garlic flowers and 6 'blown' hens' eggs (which she scrambled and ate all at once – ough!). There would have been a live caterpillar on it had she not spotted it sunbathing on the hat on her windowsill before she set off. The hat was topped by a hen (no, not a real one). After much deliberation the Hen Hat won the prize of a bottle of fizzy Prosecco. Since then the hat has featured in 3 different church harvest displays (with a few fresh herbs and berries added to make it seasonal). The obligatory raffle raised a bit more money and prizes were plentiful ... we all got (at least) one prize, "TAKE IT!" We all had a fantastic day ... hic, pardon.



Enjoying a meal at the Trefeddian Hotel, Aberdovey



The motley crew sporting their decorated hats



The winning hat

In September, some of us travelled to Trefeddian Hotel in Aberdovey for our meeting and lunch. Some items of WRAC uniform including stable belts, beret, buttons and a blazer complete with embroidered Corps badge on the pocket were auctioned off. These belonged to Elma, a member of our branch whose health is sadly deteriorating resulting in her moving into a nursing home so having no further use for the items. The auction raised some extra spending money for her treats.



Pauline trying everything on

Prior to, and on, Remembrance Day some of our members were actively raising money for the Poppy Appeal. Deanna, the local organizer for many, many years and Pauline spent many hours collecting locally. Pauline proudly wore her bottle green WRAC emblazoned polo shirt and veteran's sweat shirt whilst collecting in Morrisons in Newtown. Gill Turner and Elaine each did a stint there, proudly wearing the blazer they bought at the auction (shared it - they took over from each other). Pauline took part in the Newtown Remembrance Parade and laid the Branch wreath.



Pauline manning the Poppy Appeal stand



Pauline preparing to lay the Corps wreath

By the time this goes to print we hopefully will have had a pre-Christmas meeting and a post-Christmas lunch where we can panic about ... I mean brainstorm, how best we can host the Area Reunion in September 2019. It is our turn and although we are very thin on the ground, we are sure that now we have such an enthusiastic, lively secretary that one way or the other it will be memorable ... let's hope in a good way!

OXFORDSHIRE Christine Townsend

Oxfordshire and Area have been out and about getting together and meeting some very influential people - one of our ladies is so inspirational she was invited to have tea with the Prince of Wales on his birthday. She kindly asked if I would like to be her plus one, which of course I couldn't refuse. So on the 14th November (yes his birthday) we went to Spencer House in London to have a lovely tea and meet with Prince Charles. He was very pleased to meet us and shook our hands, had a bit of a chat about the work that Jean does with the RVS. I was pleased to be included as he spoke to me as well about the WRAC badge I was wearing. We then were seen on the BBC news the following morning, all-be-it the backs of our heads.



At Reception for Prince of Wales' birthday

Before all of this excitement the Oxfordshire Branch again led the parade in Bicester for Remembrance Sunday. After Angie had laid the wreath for us we, of course, finished the day in the only way we know how and that was lunch in the Littlebury Hotel, where we invited other members of our family to join us. I couldn't be more proud of our 7 girls who marched and kept the parade in step - Well done girls.

We will be having our Christmas bash on the 8th December where we will get together at a Christmas jumper lunch. Blessings



Oxford & Area at Remembrance parade



Oxford & Area at Remembrance parade

PHOENIX Sheila Johnson

The branch's summer outing, on 1st September 2018, started out at the Beefeater Inn, a venue handily placed opposite Telford Central Railway Station. After pre-lunch drinks and an enjoyable lunch thereafter, the members were duly fortified for the planned visit to Blists Hill Victorian Town, Ironbridge, set in 50 acres of beautiful woodland. Strolling in the blissful sunny weather added to the enjoyment.

The branch's Christmas lunch will be held at the Telford venue on December 15th 2018.



ATS presence – Recently I had the pleasure of meeting at a local coffee morning, Joy Collins, ex-ATS shorthand typist. As can be seen, Joy is looking at Issue 2 / 2018 of Lioness, which featured 80 years of the ATS as one of it's main items. Small world!

Best wishes to all branches for 2019.



SHROPSHIRE Ali McGowan

Greetings from the Shire.

The last time I wrote to you we were in the middle of a beautiful summer which Shropshire Branch enjoyed to the full. It started with our very own Shirley Gladwin taking part in the Norwich 10k and she certainly did us proud. Next year there should be a few more members of the Branch joining her at the York 10K. August also saw us support Chester Branch's Annual canal trip with lunch. The contingent from Shropshire numbered 12 and a thoroughly good time was had by all.



Shirley finishing Norfolk 10k

Now for something completely different! An evening out to a Drag Show! We had a fantastic evening at the Beaconsfield Club, Shrewsbury, seeing Benidorm's Miss Shape. A lot of our members have had the privilege to see this Act in Benidorm, so when we heard that it was coming to a club near us we had no hesitation in booking our tickets. We were not disappointed and most of us were left wondering how so many costume changes were made in such a short time and where does Miss Shape get her energy from, whatever she's on I want some!

September was time for another favourite and one that is becoming an annual event, cream tea at the Tayleur Arms, Longden upon Tern (and no I haven't spelt it incorrectly). We were very pleased to see that Lucy Bowyer was able to join us thanks to Sandra Davies providing the taxi service for her. Unfortunately, this was the last time many of us saw Lucy as she sadly passed away shortly after. I know that she really enjoyed the day and we have a lovely memory of her.

In September Chris Powell and Nancy Tipton had the opportunity to visit the Lord Kitchener's Memorial Holiday Centre in Lowestoft for a couple of days. They thoroughly enjoyed their trip and we are looking into the Branch having a break there next year. They tell me that they were well behaved, and we shouldn't have a problem booking again, we will see.



Cream Tea Outing



Chris & Nancy at Kitchener's

November was a time for us to join together with other veterans at different locations to remember the fallen and mark the 100th Anniversary of the end of WW1. Sandra Davies took

our Standard to the Remembrance Day Parade in Wellington, Shropshire and was joined by Shirley Gladwin, Sue Jackson and Sheila Murphy. A number of us went to London and took part in the Cenotaph Parade, unfortunately you will have to take our word for it as there was no television coverage at all!

It has been a sad year for the Branch as we have lost 2 of our ATS ladies this year, Hilda Dakin and Lucy Bowyer. Unfortunately, we did not hear about Hilda's death until after the event and so were not able to make any representation at her funeral. Lucy's family, however, kept us informed of her funeral arrangements and were keen for us to be present. We were happy to provide a Guard of Honour and Sandra Davies, our Standard Bearer, was joined by members of the Royal British Legion to present Standards.

I leave you, as I started, with greetings and good wishes from the Shire for a very happy 2019.

TAMWORTH **Marie Smedley**

June 2018 saw Ann Gwynne and Marie Smedley embark on a train journey to Birmingham. They went to join the Ladies of Birmingham Branch for another Pizza night, as usual we had a great time. Lots of laughs, pizza and friendship. The Branch are really looking forward to Birmingham's Christmas Party in December.

Wednesday 29th August 2018 saw members of the Branch toddle over to the Wellington Pub, Birmingham Road, Lichfield for our monthly get together and we were kindly hosted by the lovely Landlady and fellow WRAC Veteran Elaine Huggins. Thank you for having us.

Thursday 6th September saw the Branch hold their annual Quiz Night. The lovely Sheila Johnson from Shropshire Branch travelled over to join us and was most welcome. A good night was had by all who attended; especially the quiz and raffle winners. Also, in September we had our monthly meeting at The Loft in Buzzards Valley Vineyard, another super lunch followed by a little retail therapy in the vineyard shop.

Friday 9th November saw Marie and Pat Williams travel over to Ashby de la Zouch. They were invited to Ashby Church of England Primary School (Marie worked there for eleven years until recently and always took part in the school's annual commemoration of Remembrance). The service this year also included a commemorative Remembrance Poppy for World War One. At least that was the brief. When we arrived the Headteacher asked "Can you do a speech Marie? The Poppy is in memory of 2 local Lads." No pressure then! We sat down with pen and paper and started to hastily write a short speech when into the staff room walked a few new faces - "These are descendants of the lads we are commemorating" I was told. A panicked look at Pat was swiftly followed by the fire alarm - and it wasn't a drill. The entire school and visitors then converged on to the playground whilst the faulty boiler was sorted. During which time we were shown pictures of the two lads and a short description of their service. That's where the coincidences between Marie and The Jarvis Brothers were noted.

Five minutes later the school returned to the playground for their annual service. Last post was played by a lovely young man aged 9, followed by a 2-minute silence and the reveille was played by a 10 year old girl from the school.



Pat and Marie at Ashby CofE

Whilst the majority of the children returned to class, Marie, Pat, Senior staff members, Family members of Edgar and Wilfred Jarvis and the President of the Ashby RBL, Brian Denton (Fleet Air Arm Veteran), his wife Joan (WREN veteran) and children who are members of the local Scouts and Brownies as well as the School House Captains, School Sports Captains and School Council members then adjourned to the Peace Garden for the commemoration service.

Marie gave the speech detailing the details of this one local Family. The eldest son of James and Minnie Jarvis of Avenue Street, Ashby de la Zouch was Edwin James Jarvis, 266277, he died from wounds inflicted in battle in France at the Royal Sheffield Hospital (which used to be a short distance from where Marie grew up) on 13 December 1917 he was aged 19.

His younger brother Wilfred Arthur Jarvis, 41732, Royal Engineers, served in Bordon, (Marie served in Bordon from 1989-91) and died in France from wounds sustained on 3 August 1918, he too was aged 19.

After the speech Marie cut the ribbon on the Poppy with the help of Pat whose presence stopped her falling apart. (Thank you Pat.)

Remembrance Sunday, 11th November 2018 saw the majority of the Branch at the Service and parade at the National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas. A moving service followed by our laying a wreath at the Armed Forces Memorial was followed by a lovely lunch and wander around the site before journeying home.

Our final meeting of 2018 was held at Chapters Cafe, Lichfield Cathedral on Wednesday 21st November, complete with Christmas jumpers and Secret Santa. We love to travel around for our monthly lunchtime meetings - who knows where we will pop up next year. If you wish to join us at anytime, or if you are visiting the National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, please drop the Branch a line, text or FB message and if we are free we will join you. We just love tea and cake!

Tamworth and District Branch would like to wish all those who work at HQ and all WRAC members a memorable Christmas and a Joyful 2019.

EAST MIDLANDS CBM Munro MBE

Wow, doesn't fly? It hardly seems like yesterday that I took over the reins of the East Midlands Area from Maj (Ret'd) Dot Ryder. I have to admit to being a little bit overwhelmed at the prospect but thankfully, the team that is the East Midlands Branches have made it such an easy transition.

We have been busy in the East Midlands, launching a recruiting campaign area wide, reaching out to Reserve Units, and local Veteran Breakfast Clubs, creating the East Midlands HQ Branch to accommodate those who cannot make local branches.

Our fabulous bunch of Branch Secretaries have been amazing and have helped enlist several hundred new "Recruits". Hopefully those that now join us will also join the Association as fully fledged members but for now we are happy to encourage the footfall. Truth be known, once they attend and see the fun we have, majority do sign on the dotted line.

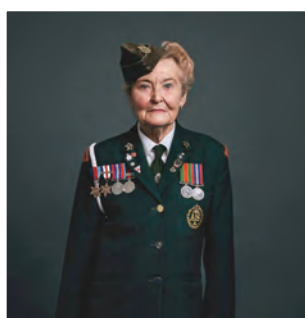
The results are speaking for themselves, with the formation of three new branches. The East Midlands HQ Branch, The North Lincoln and East Riding Branch and the Bradford Branch. It has been wonderful to watch, and credit to Dorothy Mitchelmore and Lee Guthrie for the countless hours of hard work it took to get these new branches up and running.

If you are a current member of the WRAC Association HQ Branch, but reside in the East Midlands Area, and would like to join the East Midlands Area HQ branch (EMA HQ) or would like to be included in our EMA HQ Quarterly Newsletter, then please contact me at cathy.munro@wracassociation.org.uk

My first Area AGM, hosted by the fabulous Leicester and Notts Branch. Our VP (Col Ali Brown) and I were shipped into shape, so we knew exactly what to do by the time the Christmas Lunch appeared on the horizon. Fabulous fun as always. 2019 promises to be an incredible year, as well as the Branch Events, we are also supporting the Lionesses as they pound the streets of our patch in York (York 10KM). Hosting a family's sports day (Jul, Peterborough) so get those rounders bats at the ready (Mobility Scooters and Zimmer Frames also welcome). Area Christmas Party (hopefully all EMA Branches will be able to join together to make it one heck of a shindig) and Lincoln Market. I couldn't have asked for a more active area.

Sadly, we also said goodbye to some of our Ladies of the ATS. It will seem strange not to see Joan or Barbara at our events. Two amazing ladies, always smart, soldiers to the very end. It is ladies such as these, in whose footsteps I proudly follow. I hope they are happy in our most Northern Battalion, but for now Ladies, Stand Down, Your Duty is Done.

2019 – onwards and upwards. EMA are on the move.



DERBY Judy Smith

Our numbers are growing each month and all our ladies enjoy it.

People who attended the lunch (see photo) are named below:
Judy Smith, Gail Pickard, Sue Steel, Sally Steel, Lynn Hines, Barbra Johnson, Margaret Patterson, Audrey Cross, Carole Murphy, Margaret Kent, Linda Ellis, Susan Rodgers, Sheila Rigby and Kathryn Potts.



We meet once a month on a Saturday lunchtime, normally picked by the majority on our Facebook group. If anyone is interested in joining us for our lunches they can get in touch by email (see branch meetings) via my mobile 07790848364.

EAST RIDING & NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE Dorothy Michelmores

I was lucky enough last year to be on a Facebook site and a lovely lady called Allison Pietras contacted me to say she was in Rheindahlen at the same time as me. We started to chat and as we were both lived fairly close to each other decided to meet for coffee and a chat. Another lady, Carole Murphy, saw the date and although didn't actually live in our area does visit family often and decided to join us as well.

We had such a giggle and decided to do it again. This time we put it on the various WRAC sites inviting anyone who may live local to the Beverley area to join us. The interest grew and we started having regular meetings at the Kings Head pub in Beverley and slowly our numbers grow.

It was decided by Roberta Grant that we should have our own Facebook page and it was going to be known as an unofficial catch-up club. This proved to be a great idea as we could keep up to date with information regarding meeting time and dates etc... Coffee-and-a-chat meetings quickly turned into Sunday lunch dates and this has proved very popular. We have had up to 12 ladies attending. We usually average around 8 attendees due to work/ life commitments.

After the last publication of the Lioness and seeing all the branches listed, it was evident to me that although we were

ticking along nicely we could never really reach out to possible other Lionesses in our area if we couldn't promote ourselves. Our numbers are growing each month and all our ladies enjoy it.

People who attended the lunch (see photo) are named below:
Judy Smith, Gail Pickard, Sue Steel, Sally Steel, Lynn Hines, Barbra Johnson, Margaret Patterson, Audrey Cross, Carole Murphy, Margaret Kent, Linda Ellis, Susan Rodgers, Sheila Rigby and Kathryn Potts.

We needed to cast our net further and to do this we needed to become an official branch. Lots of ladies are association members and receive the Lioness. We could be listed as a branch and possibly this might encourage people to seek us out.

At our last lunch meeting I put the suggestion to the ladies present that we become an official WRAC branch. It was also put to a vote on our Facebook site for all those who couldn't attend on the day.

It was agreed by all that we would apply to become an official Branch of the WRAC. So, for anyone out there reading this, can I just encourage you and say give it a go. What was just 3 ladies hooking up for a one-off coffee has now become the official East Riding & North Lincolnshire branch of the WRAC. Find us on Facebook.



Allison, Carole and I have enjoyed visiting the arboretum for the ATS re-dedication service and the Dinner Club weekend so far since we became friends. We have made lots of new friends within the group and long may it continue. We are now looking forward to our Christmas lunch and plotting our first activity in the New Year. Watch this space.

GRANTHAM Chris Corker

We have had a fabulous few months together having great get togethers. We have had supper out each month at a different venue each time. There are a lot of eateries in Grantham! Plans are being put in place by Elaine Framton for a visit to the local events venue to see "Menopause The Musical" starring Maureen Nolan and Cheryl Ferguson, so that will be fun.



left going round the table to the right Christine Edwards, Lou Davies, Elaine Frampton, Sue Goodes, Val O'Dell, Dot Ryder and last but not least the lovely Chris Corker

I also include a poem from our resident poetess Val O'Dell. She never lets us down!

THE LADIES IN LOVAT GREEN

BY
VAL ODELL

From Grantham this group of ladies hailed,
All bright eyed and bushy tailed.
We meet to chat what ere the weather,
Friends enjoying time together.

We are Ladies, all over forty,
Who've not forgotten how to be naughty.
But everyone is sharp and keen,
We girls who wore the Lovat Green.

There's Doris, Flogger and the Choclit Queen,
Who remember well the Lovat Green.
And one who claimed she was a "Pirate",
But we all know she was just a Private.

There's Jill and Jen and Sue times two,
Rae, two Chris'es and good old Lou.
Ella, Karen, Sandy and Elaine,
All wore the Army's Lovat Green.

Now our numbers have reached twenty,
With fun and games and laughs a plenty.
We're all so bright and quick and keen,
We Ladies who wore Lovat Green.

Now a Pride of Lionesses,
Who think it's time our group progresses.
So here we are let's take a chance,
And join with others in the National Branch.

LEICESTERSHIRE & NOTTINGHAMSHIRE Sue Slattery

Firstly, may we wish you all a happy and healthy new year and look forward to seeing many of you at our grand reunion in March. We are still very lucky at our branch to meet every month when 20-25 ladies look forward to coming along to chat and have fun, so nice to have 6 of our ex ATS ladies join us - they keep us under control!! Here is what we have been up to:

August Our meeting was to sort all the arrangements out for our annual afternoon lunch at the sailing club in Syston. On the day 30 members and 6 guests arrived for tea and biscuits followed later by our farmhouse buffet, wine and fruit juice!! Time to chat, then out came the scones, and Sandra then got out her famous trifle and sponge cakes which, as usual, many ladies took pieces home in their napkins!! Another great afternoon and our thanks to Carol and all her team of helpers.



The ladies at the sailing club in August



The sailing club Farmhouse Buffet



Dot, Chris, Rose, Ellie, Agnes & Jessie with a view of the lake at the sailing club

Also this month Lyn took our Standard along with Vi and Chris to Belgium(see Lyns separate report). A 91st birthday card was sent from the branch to Barbara Danter.

September £68 was raised this month at our harvest festival. On the 8th our branch hosted the East Midlands Area lunch - 20 of our ladies joined the other branches for a lovely meal, raffle and lots of chat with friends old and new we only see once a year. Our thanks to Dot and Chris for all their hard work putting this together.

Our Standard and ladies attended 2 services and parades this month - firstly the Parachute Regiment in Somerby, followed by the Battle Of Britain service in Leicester.



Ellie, Lyn, Carol, Sue & Chris at Somerby Parachute Regiment Parade and service, 9th September

Finally, this month on the 15th our Standard plus 5 ladies went along to the Fleckney Festival; an afternoon of military stalls and music following on from a parade through the village following an American jeep!!



October Sadly this month we were told by Ann Danter that her mother Barbara had passed away on the 14th. Barbara had been ill for some time but her passing was such a shock for her family and our branch. She had served on our committee for many years in the past and along with the late Joan De'Vall, Vi and Lilian would always be seen in the Association parade in London. It is with great sadness this year we have said good bye to 2 great ladies, Joan and Barbara, from our branch and our Association. At Barbara's funeral in Nottingham on the 24th, 15 of our members plus our Standard were joined by Shropshire's Standard, carried by Sandra Davies - thank you for coming Sandra to the farewell of a lovely lady. I'm sure more tributes to Barbara will feature in the Lioness.

Our AGM had no surprises and all our officers were re-elected. One addition to the committee Debbie (pink hair) Kenney joined the team. Also this month 4 ladies attended a service at Leicester Cathedral to welcome in our new chairman of the County Council.

Only Lynda Pollard went to the Demontfort Hall for the annual Royal British Legion festival of Remembrance. Well done Lynda, who never lets the side down. Earlier that same day our Standard plus 3 members attended the county annual poppy launch at Victoria Park (long johns at the ready).

November 26 ladies came bearing Christmas goodies for our fayre which raised £100 for our funds. Sandra informed the branch that Doris Doswell has gone into a care home for a month hoping to get her back to her best following her short illness; a few members went to the home on the 25th to take cards and gifts to Doris to help her celebrate her 95th birthday day. Get well soon Doris.

On the 7th our standard and 3 ladies attended a short service of dedication at Braunstone Civic Centre to see a poppy cascade on one side of the building with 2 granite stones either side - a wonderful site made even more special as our own Debbie had been involved in the sewing of thousands of poppies on this cascade.



Sue, Debbie, Lyn & Carol with Lord Lieutenant of Leics & the Lord Mayor at the poppy launch

The annual poppy football match at the King Power Stadium was on the 10th, where 4 of us turned up to sell our tray of poppies etc - but on arrival we then were told no selling today, as we'd been invited to join 6 other Veterans in the VIP lounge for a 3 course meal. How could we not accept this invite? We ate so much, especially Sue and her puddings!!, we struggled to march around the pitch at half time. It was a very sad day at the stadium as before the start of the game 2 minutes silence was held in honour of the club Chairman Khun Vichai who sadly lost his life in a helicopter accident 2 weeks earlier. We were so proud to have been part of this day.



Finally, our members joined others from our Association in London for the parade at Whitehall.

Our thanks to everyone at our H/Q for all their hard work they do for us.

We look forward to our Christmas lunch in December and wish our members who have not been too good recently a speedy recovery for 2019

LINCOLN & DISTRICT Jo Worsdall

Our members continue to meet each month at St Mary le Wigford Church in Lincoln, (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 (third Tuesday of every month).

We had a lovely day out to the National Memorial Arboretum in August, lovely company and a full day viewing and wandering around the Memorials, a very special place with amazing and poignant histories, we all thoroughly enjoyed the day.



Our members were busy over the Remembrance Weekend taking part in Services and raising funds for the British Legion.

Please drop in and say hello if you are in Lincoln on the third Tuesday of the month (1200-1400hrs), we always have tea and coffee!



PETERBOROUGH & DISTRICT Dot Ryder

On the 22nd August the ladies of Peterborough & District Branch held an AGM. This was chaired by our founder member Cathy Munro MBE who is now the Area Co-ordinator for the East Midlands Area. During the AGM a new committee was voted on and the Secretary is now Dot Ryder, Events Co-ordinator is Chris Corker and our Treasure is Pauline Mason. We also have a couple of co-opted members to help Chris with our programme planning.

The Branch has been allowed to wane for a while and we need to get it up and running again as an active branch. Letters and emails with our plans for the future including an events programme collated by Chris have been despatched to all members currently on our list but as yet we have had little response. If you are in the Peterborough and surrounding area why don't you come and join us for fun and festivities, you do not need to be a member of the WRAC Association, but we will endeavour to encourage you to join.



The photo is of some members enjoying a lunch together Viv Hamilton, Thelma Milton, Sue Akehurst, Val Dixon, Dot Ryder, Chris Corker, Pam Sussex and Jean Legg. Ladies are looking forward to the Christmas lunch which is to be held at The Ramblewood Inn.

YORK Feona Dixon

York was once a happy thriving branch with lots of activities. Sadly, because almost all our members were ATS ladies, the branch has become a sad branch. Some of us left, meet on a Friday morning 10.30 to 12noon at a coffee shop, because we can no longer afford to pay for anywhere else. Haxby Methodist church is a distant memory and we meet at Pret et Manger,

McCarthy Glen Designer Outlet, York - sometimes four or five of us, mostly two or even one.

I am appealing to our lovely invisible WRAC members to get together and take over the branch - arrange new meeting places, evening or weekend meetings. ***Please without you the branch will fade away.***

Facebook is fine but human contact is much more fun and valuable. I am the present secretary, e-mail me any time, feona.dixon@btinternet.com. Fingers crossed, thanks.

EASTERN
Wendy Hooton
Area Co-ordinator
wendyhootonski@aol.com

Since the last report I have had a most enjoyable lunch with the Cambridge Branch at Coton Orchard Garden Centre. It was great to catch up with everyone.

Christmas is upon us and I'm looking forward to joining Colchester Branch and Norfolk Branch for their festivities.

The Herts/Beds/Bucks Group are meeting up with some former Luton Branch members in January. Christine Barnwell is organising a lunch at the Brache (Beefeater), Osborn Road, Luton LU1 3HJ on Sunday 13th January @ 12 noon. If you would like to join us please contact Christine or myself on Facebook or email me at wendyhootonski@aol.com

I am really looking forward to the WRAC Association Centenary celebrations next year and hope to meet up with lots of you in Southampton at the Grand Reunion 22nd-24th March 2019. It will be such a great weekend not to be missed!

I would like to wish all our readers a very Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy New Year 2019.

COLCHESTER & DISTRICT
Kerry Warnes

Following another very successful 'Seaside Havoc', our next event was to be our 'Summer BBQ' held at the Ancient Britton on 2nd Sept. This was completely organized by Dawn Amey. And what a fantastic job she did too. We all thoroughly enjoyed the hearty BBQ cooked by my mate 'H' aka Milo, we were also treated to an array of home baked cakes and treats by Dawn.



Summer BBQ

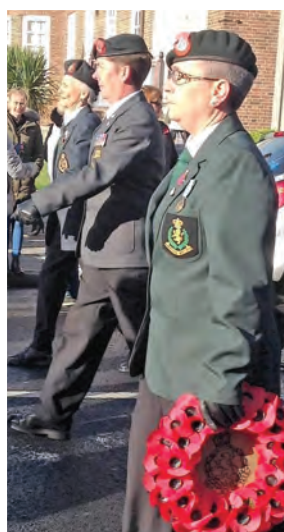
We were joined by Alison Brown, but unfortunately, she had to leave before our Tug of War rematch. However, before her departure, we were able, thanks to the proceeds from the raffle, to present her with a donation of £200 for the WRAC Association as well as a donation of £67 to the Ancient Britton for providing our local Breakfast Club which is held twice a month. I speak for everyone that attended, we had an awesome day. We will look forward to next year's BBQ. I would like to personally thank Dawn Amey for her hard work.

Our weekend away in Dudley for the WRAC Dinner Club was enjoyed by all branch members that attended, there were enough attending for us to have our own branch table. We welcomed a DC virgin to our table - Carole Murphy completed all of the initiations that she was set. So, please ladies, check your handbags when she is sat near you. As for the bushes, none were harmed this year.

Myself, Vinnie Vincent and Midge Adams took part in the Remembrance parade in Clacton, which saw the biggest ever turnout, with at least 1,100 on parade and over 5,000 supporters. The weather held out and was a very sunny but breezy day, with a brave young school girl playing the last post. After the parade we gathered at a local public house (it would be rude not to) where we raised a glass or two for Absent Friends. We all felt very humble and proud of the support shown to us.



Remembrance Day parade



Our next event will be (was) our Christmas Dinner at the The Best Western Claydon Country House Hotel 8th Dec. I am pleased to welcome alot of new faces attending this year.

The new facebook group WRAC Caravan, Camping and Motorhome group, is proving to be a great success with new members joining and sharing the various sites and advice.

I hope this edition finds everyone well and recovering from your Christmas celebrations. I would like to wish those that are attending The Grand reunion a safe journey and an enjoyable weekend.

NORTHERN

CLEVELAND Hazel Adamson

Cleveland Branch have been busy since the last report. We continue to meet the fourth Wednesday in each month, so if anyone is in the area they would be welcome to join us.

August, we went to Whitby for our summer outing when we all enjoyed a nice fish and chip lunch and a stroll along the pier. In September we hosted the Northern Area AGM at the Dom Bar in Stockton. About 40 members from the northern branches attended and all enjoyed a nice buffet lunch.



Chris Minns, Pam Ashenden, Judith Gallagher, Connie Meakins and Suzanne Allen on pier on Whitby

November saw two of our ladies, Wendy Wall and Jan Williams Landess, take part in the parade at the Cenotaph in London. Also ladies did some poppy selling with the British Legion in the local area.

Our Standard Bearer has also been busy attending military funerals and other events where she parades our Standard.

We now look forward to our Christmas Lunch at the 6 Medals again.

SCOTLAND & N IRELAND

ABERDEEN Mhairi Irving

The Aberdeen branch is still ticking over; our membership stands at 11 members, of which we have 2 life members. We try to meet up regularly in the Snug at Ma Camerons, Aberdeen. We like it so much at Ma Camerons that we decided to hold our 2018 Christmas Lunch there on 3rd December 2018

At the start of 2018 with the heavy snow fall, along with striking buses and illnesses saw our meetings being postponed. As life returned to normal, we got back into the routine of meeting on the 1st Monday of the month.

In June 2018 we took a trip to the sea side and lunch in Molly's Café, Stonehaven.

Also in June, the annual Armed Forces Parade took place in Union Street, Aberdeen, two of our ladies marched - Irene Thomson & Margaret Muirhead they representing the branch and retrospective Corps.

One of our ladies, Moira Thom, went on a trip to Ypres in July and presented a report with photos to the ladies at the August meeting. I know she found it moving and I have to say, after hearing her report, I will definitely be making a pilgrimage.

In September, 4 of our members took the trip south to the Scottish AGM; unfortunately I was unable to attend this year. Joan Bartlett was the lucky winner of the craft shield with her painted stone.

Mrs Joan Bartlett & Mrs Margaret Muirhead, both ex WRAC TA and served with 51 (Highland) Signal Squadron (Volunteers) which was part of 32 Scottish Signal Regiment (Volunteers), attended the Remembrances service at Ferryhill Church, Aberdeen on Sunday 11th November 2018. They represented both the Aberdeen Branch of the WRAC and the Aberdeen & District Branch of the Royal Signals Association.

Miss Moira Thom had a busy day on Sunday 11th November 2018, she attended the Remembrance Service at Inch Leslie Premnay Oyne Parish Church. Following the parade, headed by a piper of the uniformed organisations, veterans and congregation went to Inch Hospital, where the War Memorial is located and the names of those on the memorial were read out. Later that afternoon she visited 4 Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) graves and laid poppy posies - Private Peter Beattie at Inch Old Churchyard; Private George William Benzie at Leslie Churchyard; and Private Charles Young & Private J Beattie at Inch New Cemetery.

Contact details for the branch are: Mhairi Irving email wracaberdeen@gmail.com.

We meet between February and December on the 1st Monday of the month @ 11:00 in the Snug Bar, Ma Camerons, 6-8 Little Belmont St, Aberdeen AB10 1JG, but this is subject to change.



Suzanne at Middlesbrough after poppy-wreath laying



Judith Gallagher poppy selling in Billingham Tesco

GRIMSBY Carol Tyler

The Grimsby branch had their Christmas lunch on 29th November and the Vice-president, Ali Brown, was our guest of honour. She was made very welcome by 22 members and guests at the lunch and as this was her 4th time that she had been to Grimsby for a Christmas lunch it was like seeing a good friend again. We will certainly be inviting Ali again next year.



Grimsby Christmas lunch

ROYAL HOSPITAL, CHELSEA

“Another exciting year at the Royal Hospital” I/P Marjorie Cole

Another year has flown by at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea and this year I have been busier than normal with different events with the commemoration of the 100 year since the end of the Great War. Also 100 years since the RAF was formed, not forgetting 100 years since the WAAC became QMAAC.

One of these events was September 1st, when myself and about 50 male Chelsea Pensioners marched along Kings Road, through Burtons Court and into the North Front of the RHC, and into Figure Court to attend a Drumhead Service led by the former Bishop of London, Richard Chartres, to commemorate the ending of World War I. The march also renewed the Royal Hospital Chelsea Freedom of Chelsea.

Myself and four male pensioners attended wonderful dinner given by the RAF Association, held at Chingford Golf Club.

Of course, the main event was taking part in the Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall. I'm proud to represent the Lady Pensioners.

Remembrance Sunday saw me on duty in the Wren Chapel. Gosh I felt run off my feet – the Chapel was packed to capacity with about 150 stood outside on the steps of the Great Hall.

During the run up to the Festival of Remembrance I'm attending various prep. and state schools to talk to pupils. I often get asked by the young ones “did you serve in the war 100 years ago?” One little boy, about seven years old, said “was you born in Queen Victoria's reign?”

In July a small group of pensioners welcomed Melania Trump to the Royal Hospital. She's a very nice lady and she was so interested in everything.

In September a party of pensioners, including Monica Parrott, myself and ex-QU Barbara Wild were given a conducted tour of Number 10, Downing Street. No-one of interest was there.

There's always plenty of events for us ladies to attend, same as the men.

Before I finish this article, I would like to thank the ladies of the London Branch of the Association, especially Nina, for all the hard work she's done towards the afternoon tea at the Harbour Hotel in Guildford. It was so much enjoyed by Bimbo Coleman and myself.

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.

Unfortunately we can't always use all the photos as they are too low quality - if you could check the settings on your phone to make sure it's on atleast a medium setting. If you are scanning in photographs it would be really helpful if you could save them as jpegs rather than PDFs as this gives a better result.

Editor

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.

NATIONAL & OVERSEAS

Band

When: The Band Branch is a national Branch and does not meet on a monthly basis.

If you have Band news for the Lioness send direct to Editor@WRACLioness

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

No further WRAC Postal & Courier reunions are being organised

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
Email: wracbristolbranch@mail.com Tel: 07837 455352

Isle of Wight

When: Bi-monthly
Where: Various venues around the Isle of Wight
Contact: Tracy Biddlecombe. Tel: 07980-673402 mobile
or Email: tracyelizabeth@live.co.uk

New Forest

Contact: Madge Evans Tel 01425 620995

Plymouth

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

Contact: Sharon Bingham slbingham1@yahoo.co.uk

Torquay

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

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

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)

London

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

Medway

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 MIDLANDS

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: The Fox & Hounds, Old Church Rd, Whitchurch,
Cardiff, CF14 1AD (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

When: Every Wednesday
Where: 22 Station Road, Colwyn Bay for lunch
Contact: Linda Goodier Tel: 07392729387;
Email: goodierlynda@yahoo.co.uk

Gloucestershire

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

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

Bradford

Contact: Lee Guthrie Tel: 07909 961188,
Email: Lee.guthrie@sky.com

Derby

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

Doncaster

Contact: Veronica Hanson Tel: 01226 714575

East Riding & North Lincolnshire

Contact: Dorothy Mitchelmore.

Tel: 07897449920 Email: mydeluxe06@icloud.com

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: Sue Smith. Tel: 01636-671874

Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/Lincoln&District

Peterborough & District

Contact: Pam Sussex Tel: 01733 243944.

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

Sheffield

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

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

Contact: Brenda Colley Tel: 01709 365828

York

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

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

www.haxbyandwiggintonmethodistchurch.org.uk

Contact: Feona Dixon Tel: 01904 633438

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

If you are interested in joining them please

Contact: Chris Barrett Tel: 01799-526671

Norfolk

When: Occasional social events

Contact: Lyn Hatch Tel: 07929 070665;

email wracnorfolk@aol.com

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 Tel: 01473 327059 / 07714259949

NORTHERN

Area Co-ordinator: Anna Orlinski

Email: annaorlinski@gmail.com Tel: 07714 950219

Area Secretary: Helen Rowan. 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

If you are interested in joining a newly forming Cumbria Informal 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

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

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

Area Co-ordinator: Jo Young

Email: dorusduan@btinternet.com

Tel: 07880 602408

Aberdeen

When: 11.00 on the 1st Monday of the month (except January)
Where: Ma Cameron's (Snug Bar), 6-8 Little Belmont Street, Aberdeen, AB10 1JG (but contact Mhairi to confirm details)
Contact: Mhairi Irving Tel: 07759 076813. Email: wraca-berdeen@gmail.com

Dumfriesshire

Contact: Susan Marcroft BEM Tel: 01556 611944

Edinburgh

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

Fife & Tayside

When: Last Thursday of the month
Where: Salutation Hotel, 34 South Street, Perth, PH2 8PH
Contact: Margaret Selfridge Tel: 01738 639882

Glasgow

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

Stirling

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

Ulster

When: Meetings 3-4 times per year
Where: Location varies, call to confirm details
Contact: Sylvia Connachan. Tel: 02892 693533 or 07764711069, conna2312@gmail.com

West of Scotland

Based in / around Glasgow area
Contact: Cathy Philip Email: catriona223@gmail.com

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.

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 68 for information on our new WRAC Association membership gift vouchers



Reversible Storm Jacket
Dark Green with WRAC100 logo
Sizes S/M/L/XL/XXL/XXXL

£44



Printed Scarf
Printed with WRAC100 logo
700 x 700cm

£18



Canvas Weekender Bag
Black & grey with WRAC100 logo, detachable shoulder strap & padded handgrip. 30lt capacity.

£43



Large Jute Shopper
With short rope handles, 10oz cotton canvas front pocket. WRAC100 logo on front & back.

£18



Decanter & Whiskey Glass Set.
Engraved with WRAC100 logo in presentation box.

£38



Thermo King Flask & Mug Set.
500ml Stainless steel Vacuum Flask & 480ml Thermo Mug engraved with WRAC 100 logo

£28



WRAC100 Commemorative Coin.
WRAC100 design on both sides in leatherette presentation box.

£10



Dog Collar & Lead Set.
Green with white lettering. Adjustable Collar: 25x65mm. Lead: 25x1400mm

£10

All our usual memorabilia items still available

WRAC PTI'S AND THE RAPTC MUSEUM

Physical fitness is one of the most fundamental requirements of Army service. This is true of all soldiers, regardless of job, rank or gender.

The first female soldiers enrolled during World War One with many serving in the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC). As well as their regular duties they were expected to keep fit with daily physical exercise and games, including hockey and Morris dancing.

In World War Two women served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) which had an expanded military remit and a greater requirement for personal fitness. Physical training was organized along the lines of the regular Army and in 1942 the first ATS P.T school was opened to train female instructors. In 1944 this was relocated to the Army School of Physical Training (ASPT) in Aldershot, the home of the Army Physical Training Corps (APTC).

Physical training remained a crucial component after the establishment of the Women's Royal Army Corps (WRAC) in 1949. APTC and WRAC physical training and administrative roles became gradually more integrated at the ASPT throughout the 1970's and 80's and in 1992 28 WRAC Physical Training Instructors (PTI's) formally rebadged into the APTC. The same year, Sgt Jackie A. Gilchrist, Sgt Una J. Russell and Sgt Tina Edwards passed Probationer Course 131, becoming the first women to qualify for the APTC by completing the requisite courses alongside their male colleagues.

Today, the work carried out by PTI's in the ATS, WRAC and Royal Army Physical Training Corps (RAPTC) is remembered by the RAPTC Museum, located within the complex of the ASPT. This recognises the vital work played by ordinary instructors in keeping the Army fit and trained, as well as the outstanding contributions made by exceptional sportswomen.

Amongst the latter, the Museum holds the medals and trophies won by WO1 (SMI) June Marmont WRAC, individual Foil champion at the Royal Tournament in 1950 and 1951. The Museum also holds the tracksuit worn by Junior Commander Audrey Williamson ATS/WRAC at the 1948 London Olympics. Williamson took silver in the 200m.

One of the most famous female athletes of recent years is Dame Kelly Holmes DBE MBE who served as a Sgt and PTI in the WRAC before retiring to concentrate on athletics. The vest worn by Holmes when winning double Olympic gold at the 2004 Athens Olympics is displayed in the Museum.

Alongside the mementoes of these illustrious figures, the Museum serves as the repository for the collective memories of the WRAC PTI's. Trophies keenly contested by generations of WRAC members such as the Mould and Pegler cups have a home here, as do many of the group photos taken of instructor courses.

Together, the collection serves to remind visitors of the 50 years' contribution that ATS and WRAC instructors made to upholding the highest standards of Army physical training. This proud legacy is continued today by the many female instructors who serve at all levels in the RAPTC.



Kelly Holmes vest



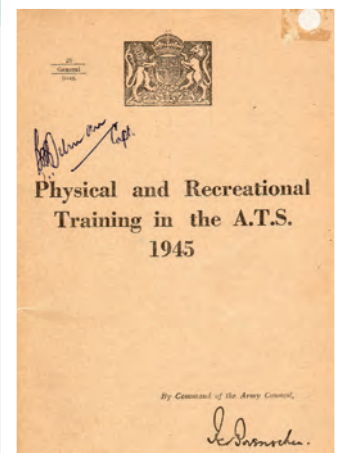
Log exercise



WRAC PTI's re-badging into APTC 1992



Audrey Williamson tracksuit



ATS Instructor's booklet

RAPTC Museum

Free entry, Mon – Fri, 9am – 4pm. Please call to confirm and bring photo ID for entrance.

Fox Lines, Queen's Avenue, Aldershot, Hants, GU11 2LB.

Eli.dawson103@mod.gov.uk

01252 787852

www.RAPTCMuseum.co.uk

ATS MEMORIES

Michael Cooper 23530759

I served with the WRAC ... and I'm a bloke! I was posted as Education Sergeant to Depot and Training Centre, Guildford in 1958. Accommodation, at first, was with the Queens next door but later we were accommodated in a Nissen hut on camp. I say "we" as we comprised 3 x RAEC Sergeants and 3 x RADC personnel. I used to find it amusing when we had to parade along with everyone else, and when I had to march towards the officer i/c parade, come to a smart halt and declare "male personnel, 3x RAEC and 3x RADC present and correct, Ma'am."

I enjoyed my time there, particularly the teaching, so much so that I became a teacher when my three years were up. There are many memories but one of the most enduring is of the band. The WRAC band was absolutely superb with many gifted musicians.

Visitors to the Warrant Officers and Sergeants' Mess would never believe me when I said I was billeted there!

BLETCHLEY PARK

'Ultra 1' article

By Gemma Briggs. Extract taken from Ultra, Bletchley Park's Friends membership magazine, issue no.11 Autumn 2018. Republished with permission © Bletchley Park Trust / Culture Shock. Find out more about becoming a Friend and supporting the continued restoration of Bletchley Park at www.bletchleypark.org.uk/friends



"I WAS HAPPY AT THE TIME AND I'M STILL PROUD NOW"

As the ATS celebrates its 80th anniversary, Gemma Briggs finds out how its women made a vital contribution to the work of Bletchley Park.

For three long years during World War Two, Jeanne Clapp found herself living in a school in Harrogate, North Yorkshire. It might not sound as though the 20-year-old was playing a vital role for the Allies, yet the young ATS recruit had her ear trained on the secret messages being sent by the Nazis. Having signed up to the ATS in 1943, Jeanne worked at the Y Station Forest Moor, listening to and transcribing enemy communications, which were then sent directly to Bletchley Park.



Jeanne Brabham nee Clapp

The Auxiliary Territorial Service, which was founded 80 years ago this September, was the women's branch of the British Army and with 250,000 members the largest of the three women's services, which also included the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) and the Women's Royal Naval Service (WRNS). With full military status, its serving women carried out over 100 different roles, from cooks and orderlies to mechanics and intercept operators, such as Jeanne.

"I went first of all to the Isle of Man for two months to learn the Morse code," recalls the 95-year-old, now Jeanne Brabham. "The instructor said he would give a shilling to anyone who could take down a set piece. I was the only one who did it and he gave me the shilling - it was quite a lot of money in those days! I don't remember what I bought with it, but I can still remember some of the Morse code."

Taken from their billet at the school to the Y Station in army trucks, Jeanne and her ATS colleagues would work four intense shifts before being given a day off. "It was quite hard work really, concentrating for hours. It was three years I was there. In the end the messages came through in plain German and that's when we knew the war was over."

As with so many women who made an important contribution to the war effort, Jeanne looks back on her experience with satisfaction. "I felt happy at the time and I'm still proud now. When they have a reunion at Bletchley Park I usually go along and remind them that if it was not for us taking down the messages they would not have been there!"

While the role that Jeanne played in British intelligence saw her working hundreds of miles from Buckinghamshire, other members of the ATS were stationed in the Codebreaking hub itself. Their functions ranged from indexing and log reading to operating machinery including Typex and Teleprinters. Women who had transferred from the Y Station Beaumanor were involved in traffic analysis; those who were part of SIXTA (an element of the Military Section) were log reading; and those in the Testery were Tunny operators.

Although at their peak in January 1945 there were only 415 officers and other ranks from the service present at Bletchley Park – making them the smallest of the three Women's services there – some of these women found themselves at the heart of the operation.

Charlotte Vine-Stevens, now Betty Webb MBE, joined the ATS in 1941 and had the honour of working in the iconic Mansion. "I volunteered and did my basic training – learning how to be a soldier – and because my CV showed that I was bilingual, I was sent to London and then on to Bletchley Park," explains Betty.



Betty Webb MBE

"I was in the Mansion for quite a lot of time before I went to Hut 4 and then Block F. We were very fortunate in the Mansion, although we still did not have a great deal of heating once the coal and the wood gave out. It was very comfortable; I was in an office with Major Tester. The uniform was very practical and basic, but it was reasonably comfortable and we had greatcoats in the winter to keep us warm."

Betty's job was in the Military Section and involved indexing signals from the German Police. "All I had to do was register them," she recalls. "I didn't know at the time that they were from German Police, as everything I saw was in five letters or five figures. They did not tell you anything and I was not meant to know."

"It was fairly boring because we did not know what we were actually handling at the time. It was not until a few years ago I was told it was signal traffic to do with the Holocaust. We knew

everything was important, but just how important I didn't know until very much later."

While members of the ATS were denied the same status as their male counterparts – earning just two thirds of the wage a man who was the same rank did – those who had specific language skills or showed aptitude for certain tasks could find themselves in the most unusual of situations. For Betty, who excelled in paraphrasing decoded Japanese messages, this meant being transferred to the Pentagon.

"I had never been up in the air before and suddenly I was faced with getting on a Sunderland flying boat at Portsmouth. We got on a little boat and climbed onto the plane along the wings. We went to Ireland and had supper, then on to Newfoundland, then Baltimore and then the train to Washington. It took about 22 hours."

This incredible journey was only the beginning of a new challenge for Betty, but in her own words she "had always been one for taking things as they come". Upon joining the ATS, no woman could be sure what role she would be given. Indeed, Princess Elizabeth II served in ATS, joining as a subaltern in 1938 and employed rebuilding engines and driving ambulances.

Last year, the Queen met with Veterans including Betty, highlighting the lasting debt owed to these remarkable women. "Meeting the Queen was a splendid occasion and she seemed to be very interested in Bletchley Park," she says. "She was a mechanic in the ATS; having served is something we are all very proud of."



Betty Webb MBE
HISTORY OF THE ATS

The Auxiliary Territorial Service was born out of the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps (WAAC), which had been formed in 1917. WAAC members served in roles such as clerks and cooks during World War One, but it was disbanded in 1921.

On 9 September 1938 – with war on the horizon - the ATS was formed as a women's voluntary service, incorporating the First

Aid Nursing Yeomanry (FANY). Although initially roles were limited to those such as orderlies and store women, the list eventually extended to over 100 different duties. Conscription came in December 1941 and altogether more than a quarter of a million women served in the ATS during WW2, making it the largest of the three women's services. Notable women to join the service included Princess Elizabeth II, and Mary Churchill, the youngest daughter of the Prime Minister. Nancy Bird, who worked at Bletchley Park in SIXTA, an element of the Military Section responsible for traffic analysis, went on to become the first-ever winner of the Mastermind competition, in 1972.

During the course of WW2, 335 members of the ATS were killed, including three who worked at the Y Station at Chatham, which was bombed in 1940. In 1949, the ATS was absorbed into the Women's Royal Army Corps (WRAC), which was disbanded in 1992.

The WRAC Association continues to bring together women who served, including those of the ATS, helping members with camaraderie in old age and assistance to those in need. Those who served in the ATS can find out more at wracassociation.org, info@wracassociation.org.uk or 0300 400 1992.

WOBBLY WILLIE AND THE SKILL OF THE ATS

Although ATS personnel working out of Y Stations were not part of the immediate Bletchley Park operation, their supporting role was a crucial one. In some cases, the intuition and attentiveness of these staff made a real difference.

In the lively memoir of intercept operator Gwen Sidwell (available to view on her Roll of Honour entry at <https://bletchleypark.org.uk/roll-of-honour/8294>), she recalls becoming familiar with particular German operators. "Like typists and pianists, everyone has a different touch, or something that gives their performance originality" she wrote. "So it was, quite often, with senders of Morse. This was to be a terrific help to us."

She recalls seeing a map of a particular battle line the Germans were defending, and recognizing the towns as being the ones the Division she was listening to were operating from. At one of the stations, the German operator had a distinctive wobble and was often in trouble for answering late. Gwen and the other ATS operators covering this Division nicknamed him 'Wobbly Willie'. "When they sent their closing-down codes as they retreated, we'd cross off each town," wrote Gwen. "We then had to keep our ears glued to the set to pick them up again when they set up another network in a different location. Wobbly Willie was a great help!"



ATS Veterans

Mabel Robinson, Kathleen Cook and Betty Webb today

MY JOURNAL OF ATS SERVICE IN WORLD WAR II (Mrs) W.A. DUFFILL

In 1939, when I was eighteen, England became aware of the impending war with Germany. I was called up for National Service on 25th August 1939, Poland was invaded on September 1st, 1939 and war with Germany was declared on 3rd September 1939.

My calling up, mobilization, papers were delivered to my parents' house and were marked OHMS (On Her Majesties Service). They had been opened by my Mother when I was at work as she knew the letter was important and I found her waving it and beckoning for me to hurry when I came home on the 25th August 1938. I remember that I had my tea and then I packed my uniform before reporting to Millhill Barracks. My uniform consisted of only a jacket! I later learnt that I was not alone in not having a full uniform as one girl had initially been issued with just a skirt and another just a tie!

The next morning my colleagues from the Drill Hall were waiting at the barracks dressed in the various bits of uniform they had been issued with and, after a week of living at home, I was found a billet, opposite the barracks. My rent was 7 shillings a week. The Government paid for our food and accommodation and I vividly remember that our last meal of the day was at 5pm and consisted of sandwiches and cocoa. After a time, we were all supplied with uniforms but only with mackintoshes, not warm great coats, and issued with heavy shoes which made everyone's feet bleed. However, they polished up very well after a while!

Whilst staying at Millhill I developed acute tonsillitis and was referred to Shenley Hospital - a mental institution in Hertfordshire - to have my tonsils removed. After discharge from hospital I was promoted to Corporal (two stripes) which meant I had an extra 4p a day! We were all issued with uniforms but as I have already explained, despite the bitterly cold winter, none of us had a top coat. We experienced resistance from the soldiers in the barracks as they realized we were taking over their jobs so that they could join the fighting forces. I was in Number 1 Machine Gun Company and had numerous jobs relating to pay, leave and the issuing of uniforms - a very busy time as the Regiment was posted to Singapore in the Far East. I remember that the parade ground was packed with marching men and filled with shouts from the Sergeants who applied discipline and drill whilst training the men to use small arms and machine guns. Unfortunately, only three of our companies returned to England after the war with Japan as there were a great many casualties - brave individuals, who had been tortured or who had died in prison camps.

It didn't take long for London to be badly bombed and we were tasked to issue open ended passes for the men affected, as many lost families and homes - however those who had families killed and homes destroyed returned to barracks and none deserted. Bombs were ever present and one weekend when I was on leave six men of the Bomb Disposal Squad used the office I had been working in. Unfortunately, the bomb they were dismantling was new to them and, as a consequence, it blew up. Three men were killed whilst the others were badly injured.

We all had a short spell at Northolt, the racecourse near Wembley, where civilians made ammunition and worked alongside soldiers. This was not a happy arrangement, however, as the soldiers pay was two shillings a day, the girls' one shilling

and four pence a day but they were able to work overtime. After being promoted to Sergeant I was sent on a three-week course at Lichfield and subsequently recommended for a commission - this meant many weeks in a very cold Edinburgh. We were allocated rooms in a big house "Craig Millars" and, much to my dismay, my room-mate was a ballet dancer who decorated our room with cushions, scarves and pictures.

At the Officer Cadet Training Unit, we were allocated liaison huts for our lectures and I remember, painted over the door of the hut, were the words 'Abandon All Hope Ye Who Enters Here!' Our badges of rank were removed, and we were all called Cadets. I remember mealtimes being a nightmare because our table manners were noted as we engaged in conversation with the officer who sat next to us. It was hard but interesting work and when lectures went on until 9.00pm we were given the afternoon off.

Towards the end of the course we were all excited that we had been accepted as Officers. This was made all the more real when Moss Bros, the outfitters from London, came to measure us for Officers uniforms - we had to pay for them of course. After completing the course, we were given one week's leave and we all went home with white bands on our lapels and a white band on the rim of our hats. Joy of joys, my Officers uniform from Moss Bros. was waiting for me and it fitted perfectly. How proud both my parents were when I was wearing my uniform and two soldiers passed me and saluted. I pointed out to my parents that they were not saluting me but the uniform.

When I was still at Millhill Barrack,s King George VI paid us an official visit, which meant that the Regimental Sergeant Major spend hours shouting and screaming at the troops, soldiers had to wash a heap of coal that was stacked up by the Cook House to make it look clean, cut flowers were purchased and planted in the path leading to the Colonel's Office and not a speck of dust or dirt was allowed to be seen. The visit was very short, but I think we all passed muster!!! The second time I had contact with King George VI was a very sad time as I received a letter informing me that my first husband, Reg Scott, had gone missing on operations in Reykjavik, Iceland. He was in the Coastal Command RAF and, according to official sources, the plane had been on a sortie to find and sink German submarines. He was on his last sortie as he had completed twenty-eight raids.

As a Catering Officer in North Wales I went to local farms to buy eggs for the camp. At first the farmers thought that I was checking up on them but when I produced sweets for the children it was a different story and I was invited into the kitchens and given slices of newly baked bread topped with cream and jam - what a treat! One of my duties was to ensure that the cooks had a good supply of cake and eggs so that the men going on leave could take home a dozen eggs and a fruitcake.

I had several postings in England, and was sent to the Kimnel Park Searchlight Camp in North Wales. We had been trained by the Searchlight Regiment in London and I found it was an arduous course as we had to learn to train the target beam of our searchlight on the enemy plane. Nonetheless I was stationed in North Wales for a long time and knew the camp well, it was huge and had only half a dozen female officers. I remember that our recreation involved taking our section on a 22-mile hike! We had a lorry following behind us, to pick up the stragglers, as there were many who couldn't make it. To show the men up, about 100 yards from the camp gate, we used to throw our shoulders back and hold our heads up high and, all together, we would sing a

marching song! After a foot inspection and a meal the hardy ones would even go to a dance in the camp!

I helped train several sections of girls for the London searchlights and then out of the blue, a notice from the War Office asked for officers for the ATS Provost Service, in other words the Military Police. Days later I heard that I had passed the War Office interview and after a few weeks in Bedfordshire another letter arrived from Head Quarters asking if I would like a posting to Palestine or India? On the list of clothes to take to India were three dance dresses ... so I turned down India as I considered that I was in the service to help win the war and not to dance and go clubbing! I accepted the promotion to Staff Junior Commander (Captain) and became the Deputy Assistant Provost Marshal Palestine and Trans Jordan (D.A.P.M).

All of our postings were dangerous as we had to be mindful of bombs and kidnappers, so I was given a revolver, a colt 75, which I carried in my shoulder bag. I also had two soldiers, with machine guns, to escort me on shopping trips into the city. Initially I was offered a flat in the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem but as I disliked it, I settled in the Allenby Barracks on the Bethlehem Road. This proved to be a very good move as there were three other female officers in the Quarters. It was so nice to have female company again and Denise, who was in charge of Signals, became a good friend. We received many invitations from visiting officers to have dinner with them and it was amazing how many times a week we used the excuse that we were washing our hair!

The duties of the Provost Military Police included counting and registering all military personnel (including Army, Navy and RAF) who came into and left Palestine and, if not registered, it was our job to find them and to send them back to their regiments. We were not popular with the local hotels and brothels as they were often searched in the middle of the night - this was quite an education at times! Trains, buses and houses were also searched, and danger lurked all around us. I was allocated a Hummer car and a female driver who was tiny, so I named her 'half pint'. She had been born in Jerusalem and spoke five languages.

As Deputy Assistant Provost Marshall (DAPM) I was responsible for overseeing the Military Police in the Middle East and I had to travel a great deal. On one day, when I went to Cairo, I was accompanied by a colleague who wanted to buy a wedding dress. We set off very early one morning, crossed the Sinai Desert by car along a bumpy road and unfortunately became sand sick. We decided to stop and almost immediately a patrol of British soldiers appeared in their jeeps. They promptly produced 'billy' cans and mixed petrol with sand to create a fire. Within minutes they had made us delicious mugs of steaming hot strong tea - the very best I had ever had! We arrived in Cairo in early evening and stayed in the Kes-Rai-Nile Barracks. I hated Cairo as it was so noisy and so dangerous that we were warned not to have wrist watches on show as our hands could have been slashed by knives and our watches stolen in a flash. My friend purchased her wedding dress and I completed my work before we went back to Jerusalem. The return journey was uneventful, we didn't see the patrol who made such a good cup of tea and even the sand dunes seemed flatter!

Sometime later, I had an invitation to go to the Brigadier's Cocktail Party. I decided to attend as I wanted to get a clothes allowance for my girls as they had to wear their civilian clothes on special duties. Having done so I was about to leave when a

good-looking Police Officer came over and introduced himself as Harry Duffill, Superintendent of the Palestine Police. We chatted for a few minutes and then he asked me if I had had dinner. I had not and was very hungry so accepted his kind invitation. Over a delicious meal we discovered that Harry's home in the UK was about twenty miles from mine, and it was wonderful to share our stories which made home and England seemed so very much nearer. I remember that the orchestra played Debussy's *Clare de la Lune*, and to this day my thoughts go back to that evening when my gallant escort, Harry, came to pay the bill and found he had left his wallet behind in his room! However, he signed a cheque and went back the next morning to settle the bill. I also remember that within twenty-four hours of our first meeting Harry proposed to me.

We met as often as we could, and I learnt about his duties as an officer in the Palestine Police. He was an excellent linguist, he spoke fluent Arabic, Hebrew and Swahili and he was often called to mediate in tribal disputes and when non-English speaking guests arrived. On one occasion we had an invitation to visit Hebron and to have lunch with the Arab Mayor. I remember walking up a hill to his house and, as it was very hot, I removed my coat and carried it on my arm. The Mayor saw this and courteously took it from me and quickly tucked it under his long white flowing gown. Before we ate our hands were washed by water being poured over them and we sat down, cross legged, on beautiful carpets and cushions. There were over a dozen Arab leaders present and I found myself the guest of honour. As the meal progressed I realized, to my horror, that I was to be presented with a special morsel - a whole sheep's eye. However, I surreptitiously slipped it on to Harry's plate which was close to mine and he told me later that it was delicious! Whilst the men continued to talk, I was taken to a separate building and met the Mayor's wife and twelve children. We conversed in English and I felt it to be a real privilege to meet such a lovely Arab family. Later I learnt that the Stern Gang, or 'Lehi Fighters', had subsequently shot the Mayor in both knees.

By 1945 the war had ended, and Harry put his name down for a transfer to Tanganyika, now Tanzania, as he did not want to serve under a Jewish Government. I returned to England and, having relinquished my commission, went to East Africa where we were married. We were happily married, for 57 years.

WARTIME MEMORIES OF THE A.T.S. Lucy Bowyer

It was 1941 and I lived in the small village of Wheelock Heath situated between Crewe and Sandbach in the County of Cheshire approximately 170 miles North of London. I was almost 20 years old at the time and in a reserved occupation working at a dairy product factory but decided I wanted a change and would volunteer to serve in the armed forces, a fact I kept hidden from my parents at the time. I applied to join the women's army known then as the Auxiliary Territorial Service or A.T.S. for short. It was only when I received the notification to attend for a medical examination that my parents were made aware of what I had done.

Having successfully passed my medical, June 1941 saw me on my way to report to a commandeered hotel in Portland Street, Manchester, there to join other girl recruits and be sent by train to Lancaster. The venue was Bowerham Barracks home at the time of the Kings Own Regiment, a formidable place steeped in Army tradition. There we were to endure ability tests to ascertain what type of work we were best suited to and, of course, learn

the discipline and marching skills of the British Army from men instructors. Our full kit was issued here, and I became W/59097 Private Lucy Evans after which we were given vaccinations and the usual injections associated with the forces which left most of us ill and wondering whether we had done the right thing in joining up in the first place.

We were up early in the morning when 'reveille' sounded and seemed to do everything to numbers, having very little time to ourselves and collapsing in bed at night tired out. This went on for a month and the pay was 11 shillings per week (equivalent to 55p today) which did not buy much. I sent half of this to my mother, so she had 5 shillings and sixpence (22.5p).

Our initial training over, together with other girls, we were despatched to Oswestry where there were four training regiments of the Royal Artillery (Anti-Aircraft) called Park Hall Camp. My destination was 7th Heavy Trng. Regt. and there to train on anti-aircraft instruments. Some became spotters, on the lookout for enemy aircraft, height and range finder instrument operators (this was my job) and predictor operators (the instrument which decided when and where the guns should be fired). The actual firing of the guns was done by the men.

While I was at the camp I met my future husband, after only having been in the A.T.S. for one month. We met at Whittington Castle, Gobowen and proceeded to the Old Boot Inn nearby for a drink to celebrate.

Fully trained we were formed as 443 Battery/132 (Mixed) Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regt. Royal Artillery and sent to firing camp at Ty Croes on the Isle of Anglesey, North Wales, for practice purposes consisting of firing at a sleeve towed by an aircraft out at sea. What a chance for the ladies to train their sights on the men (pilots) in the firing line, so reversing the roles. Now fully operational we were sent to Paisley in Scotland in defence of the River Clyde and the shipping there. Meanwhile I was still corresponding with my future husband back at Oswestry in a different Regt. We did not see much of each other but at Christmas 1941 we decided to get engaged with the wedding planned for March 1942. Getting wedding clothes was so difficult because clothes were rationed, and coupons were required, for which service people did not qualify. However, one of my comrades lent me her wedding dress and I managed to buy a head-dress which I kept in a trunk in the cold tin-roofed Nissan hut which was both our communal living and sleeping quarters. This was a cold February 1942, and to keep clothes aired we put a hot water bottle in the trunk. Disaster nearly struck as I forgot about my waxed head-dress and some of the beads were melted with the heat, but I am pleased to say it was still wearable.

I was promoted to Lance Corporal and was married on 14th March 1942 to become W/59097 L/Cpl. Lucy Bowyer. Back to Scotland, where at times it was so cold on duty we had to keep a hot water bottle under our battle dress blouses when about the camp, not army issue I may add! Eventually I had a posting to join 487 Battery/137 (Mixed) H.A.A. Regt R.A. at Ellesmere Port guarding a large oil refinery. We were not allowed out of the camp on leave until on arriving at the guard room we correctly identified the plane of the day. This was an enemy aircraft silhouette, changed every day and having individual identification marks. An incorrect answer meant you were not allowed out.

From there the Regt. was moved to London to defend against air raids and flying bombs and our battery was stationed at Whetstone in North London. Our nickname for the flying bombs

was “doodle bugs” and we knew that when the motor cut out they would dive to earth and explode, but we did have a success rate against them. One night our battery fired over 300 rounds, success unknown. It was a sight to be seen when the air raid alarm sounded on camp during the night and girls had to jump out of bed pull on boots and greatcoats over army issue pyjamas, struggle to get tin helmets over hair curlers and dash to our posts to take up duty stumbling over objects on the way under the strict blackout conditions which prevailed.

I think we were there for about two years. By this time, I was a Sgt. and my husband had been sent overseas to North Africa early in 1943. One of the benefits of being a Sgt. was being able to make ourselves a cup of tea on stand-down before returning to bed, a privilege denied to other ranks. Reveille was still at the same time the next day regardless of the time being on duty on a standby. Part of our Regt. was stationed in Hyde Park near to the Houses of Parliament and Sir Winston Churchill's daughter, Mary, was an officer in that Battery. She, it was, who demobbed me when I finally left the service.

Soon we were on the move again, and it was rumoured that we were going overseas as we were sent to the East coast. Only a few days there and then in December 1944 to private houses which had been commandeered as billets in Weybridge. These proved to be better than the Nissan huts we had been used to and it was therefore a luxury for me and a fellow Cpl. to be able to have a hot bath at the home of Leslie Chateris, the author of “The Saint” books, in his absence, of course. However, when we came to let the water out afterwards it would not budge as the drain pipes were frozen and we left without having the courage to tell the resident housekeeper of the problem.

January 1945 was just as cold but in the middle of the month we were transported to Tilbury Docks in London to board the S.S. Longford en route for Ostend, Belgium. For so many of us it was our first time abroad and experience of sailing on the sea. The journey seemed to take hours as we had to avoid minefields and we were in very confined quarters on this merchant ship. All of us were sick and so it was with much relief when we arrived at the port of Ostend as the clock was striking 13.00hrs. There was heavy snow on the ground as we formed up and were marched to our temporary quarters in two local hotels, for two nights. I shall always remember the local children snowballing us as we marched. We then joined the convoy of lorries which were to take us to our gun site. The lorry, with male driver took a wrong route on our way to our gun site and we found ourselves heading for the front line. It was dark now and we could see the flashes from the guns firing ahead, so we turned back and the army lorry got stuck in a snowbound lane. So, our driver left us to seek help and eventually we were taken to the house of a Belgian family to be made very welcome. We felt it was something very precious for this kind family to offer us a drink after the hardships in rationing they had undergone but I must admit my first taste of black coffee tasted like nectar. Help for us eventually arrived and we were taken to some sort of a castle, eventually travelling to our gun site at Neerijse situated between Leuven and Brussels, as our guns were being used in the defence of the Port of Antwerp.

Our new living quarters were again Nissan huts and our only source of heat was from a paraffin stove on which we also had to heat the water for our ablutions. There were four of us in our hut, all Sgts. and each day we put our ration of water in our wash bowl which was a petrol can which had been cut in half for the purpose. When our turn to wash came round, we first washed

our hands and faces, other parts too and finally the remaining water was used for our smalls. We took our main laundry to the local villagers who washed it in the village square using stones to pound out the dirt and grime. We would pay with soap and cigarettes and also barter for fresh eggs with chocolate or anything else we had from a food parcel we may have had from home, although they were scarce due to rationing at home. The army arranged that at least once per week baths were made available, this was in a very cold hut the water being heated outside on a field boiler and the makeshift baths only being allowed to be filled to the height of 5 inches per person. Towards the end of the queue the hut was warmer than the water!

We had to improvise sweeping brushes for the huts out of twigs we gathered from the trees and then there were the latrine buckets to be emptied as and when necessary. This meant a detail squad being instructed to carry them to a massive pit, dug previously for the purpose then covered with sand and suitably marked “foul ground”. We were allowed leave in Brussels occasionally and then we could have a proper bath in the servant quarters of the Palace there, a real luxury.

The war finished and we joined in the celebrations in Brussels before being sent into Antwerp as a unit taking in the equipment being brought back from the front line for local storage. I remember one day being instructed to find one of the male Sgts. of our Battery and to tell him there was to be a pay parade. I found him with a party of German soldiers digging up the bodies of dead servicemen who had been buried in shallow graves in order that they could be properly identified and then reinterred in a military cemetery nearby. If I remember rightly they were mainly Canadian airmen.

After a short while in Antwerp we were then flown to Germany in a Dakota aircraft and landed at Luneburg Heath and were the first A.T.S. there. We went by road convoy to an airfield 26 miles S.W. of Hamburg where we were again involved in the checking in of front line equipment as before. Hamburg became a place for leave but it was a terrible sight, almost utter devastation from the Allied bombing combined with the awful smell of the dead still in the ruins. We were able to eat at the places set aside for service personal but outside we would find children begging for scraps of any sort of food. The German civilians also had to scrounge and beg for food, German men even resorting to picking up cigarette ends thrown away by troops to make a smoke for themselves. Outside the Y.M.C.A. we saw the locals picking in the dustbins for any leftover food thrown away, a very heartrending sight even for a defeated nation.

Looking back over my 4 ½ years in the army I recall the hard times and hardships and also the good times and the laughter we all enjoyed in adversity as a Regimental body of people from all walks of life; the discipline we encountered when we first joined and the strict obedience to orders at all times but what I think mainly stands out in my memory is the spirit of comradeship we all enjoyed which has endured even to the present day when we have ex-service get-togethers. Thank goodness there was always somebody with a sense of humour to help cheer everyone up when the going was tough.

So it was at the end of 1945 I left the service to start and set up a home ready for the return of my husband from Italy. We had not seen each other for 3 years, when he came back on leave in April 1946, to return abroad before finally being demobbed in July of that year, after 7 years' service. We set up home and both worked to bring up our three children during the lean years

after the war when even then rationing was in force. It was not until about 1978 that I learned that there was a W.R.A.C. (A.T.S) Association for ex-service Army women so I was happy to join the Wolverhampton Branch and join up with old comrades again.

Moving to Wellington, Telford, I transferred to the Shropshire Branch in 1980. I took over as Treasurer in 1987 on the death of one of our members and also a little later became standard bearer, when the branch were able to raise sufficient money to purchase one. It was dedicated at Donnington Garrison Church in November 1988 and paraded for the first time on Armistice Sunday there. I learned of the planned 45th Anniversary celebrations by the Burgomaster and citizens of Antwerp in September 1989 through our Association magazine The Lioness and I was lucky enough, with five others who had served there during the war, to be sent an invitation. What a fantastic event it was with all veterans from the Britain, Canada, America and many other nations taking part. The city did us proud and non moreso than the Burgomaster, Bob Cools. We were welcomed, dined and feted by a grateful city and there were few dry eyes at the various venues at which we were thanked for what we did to help them during the war. I was the only woman Corps standard bearer on the parade and I carried our county W.R.A.C. (A.T.S) standard, in a place of honour at the front for the march past.

In my capacity as standard bearer I have been all over the country and have been guard of honour to the Queen Mother at Guildford Cathedral and lucky enough to have had a few words with her at the time.

I also had the honour to carry the W. R. A.C. (A.T. S.) standard, prior to the break-up of the Corps, at the November 1992 Royal British Legion Festival of Remembrance at the Albert Hall. I marched across the arena on my own, so at least I was in step. The event broadcast by the B.B.C. T.V. was seen worldwide and a pen friend from Detroit U.S.A. saw me for the first time after we had corresponded since the war years, through the relayed broadcast on Canadian T.V.

Also, through the W.R.A.C. Association I have met and spoken to the Queen and have met the Duchess of Kent and the Duchess of Gloucester. So far, I have paraded the standard on 87 occasions wearing my three medals, including the France/ Germany Star, with pride and am hoping to make it 100 - not bad for a nearly 75 year old!

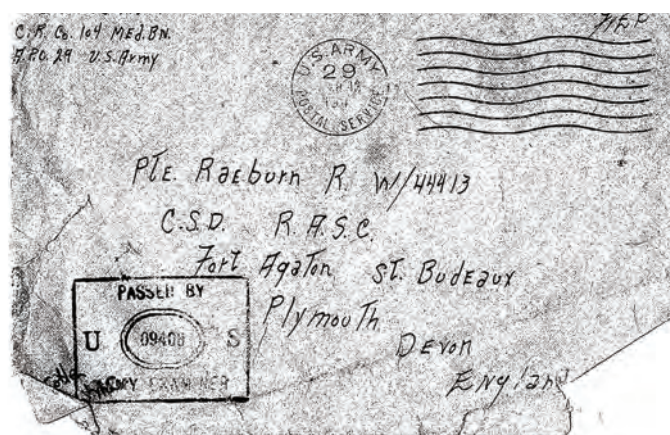
MARTINNE FREESTONE (NEE FRENCH) Jean Farrington

Martinne was my aunt. She joined in 1942 aged 17half, till 1946, as a cook attached to Ack Ack in London. I don't know very much more than that but, like so many others, loved being an Association member in Cambridge for many years.



HAZEL ADA DRAKE Raeburn Garrison

Hello, my mother was in the ATS during WWII. She was born in Plympton, Devon; lived in Plymouth, then in Totnes. She met my father in Devon, at a dance that my father's unit was putting on. Dad was in the 29th Infantry Division, 104th Med. Bn, Clearing Company. He met mother at an estate that he called Chattlewood(?). A unit from India was living there but they moved out for the invasion of North Africa. They fell in love and were married on March 31st 1945 in Totnes Methodist Church. After their brief honeymoon dad re-joined his unit in Germany where he stayed until September of 1945. I have some pictures of mother in uniform and some of her mates as well. Would love to share them with someone. Sadly, mum passed away in 2000; Dad passed away in 2016. I have a love letter dad wrote to her from France addressed to a Ft. Agaton(?), somewhere in Devon I suppose. By the way - Dad's unit participated in the D- Day invasion.



[Editor's note: this gentleman is going to write the story up in his impending retirement but for now asks if anyone can help him with the acronyms used on the envelope – eg C.S.D., R.A.S.C., etc. Let HQ office know and we will pass information onto him]
Cecil Lynn Garrison Jr

REMINISCENCES PHOTOS: Miss Mary E Marshall



Pyjama party, last night at Guildford (end) 1967



Staff Sgt 'Jim' Davidson, GW(W)1; Pte Mary Marshall, age 17-18, A-company, 12 Battalion



Aug 1959 - As Drivers & Clerks Training Wing depart (Handsworth Barracks, Yeovil?)



Houndsworth Barracks, Yeovil; Drivers & Clerks Training Wing, 1959

Book publication: 'Escaping the Ordinary: How a founder of the SAS blazed a trail at the end of the Empire'

**(Sequel to 'Gentleman Jim: The wartime story
of a founder of the SAS')
By Lorna Almonds-Windmill**

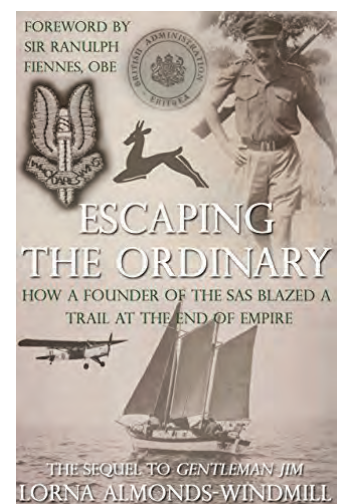
Little has been written about Britain in the Horn of Africa, Malaya or West Africa. This book recounts post-war unreported military and police operations in those theatres - through the story of one man.

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 policemen 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, he 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 the US in Vietnam) 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.



Reunions & Dinners

FABULOUS WRAC DINNER AND WE HAD SOME FAIRIES WITH US!

Carol Traynor



From beginning to end this year's dinner was full of laughter, fun, and friendship. The committee had worked hard to make our weekend go well, and an extra nice thought was transport laid on for us courtesy of Babs Anderson's lovely son, who drove a mini bus back and forth to the shopping centre and did it with such a nice attitude.

The reception room had good stalls, and had a lottery which went down very well. As we were sat in the bar a girl came in beaming and shouting "I've won a hundred quid", so we made sure we had a go pronto, and lo and behold I won a hundred quid too with the number of the year I joined up!

The dinner evening was fabulous, our table enjoyed the menu and thought the food was delicious, and the waiting on staff were lovely. The room and tables were decorated beautifully, and the committee had thought of extra things for us to help make the dinner evening lots of fun - there were cut out animal faces passed around the tables for us to take pics with, which caused a lot of hilarity, and a gold frame was going round to also take pics with.

After the meal had finished, we suddenly saw a troop of twinkle toed fairies daintily dancing their way through the tables! Too much wine we thought! but no there they were fairies in tutu's twirling and waving their wands! and they gave us a performance that would rival the Royal Ballet! "No-one loves a fairy over forty" was the tune, and it was simply hilarious, an inspired surprise addition to the entertainment that went down really well.

The entertainment was The Land Girls with forties songs, which had us all on our feet waving our flags and singing our hearts out it was great. Kim and Jake followed, and as always they were amazing, we love them and always look forward to them being with us, they sing exactly the right songs, which always has us up dancing straightaway, and the floor stays full until the end of the night, and makes us feel like we are the young girls we once were when we joined up.

The hotel was very good with lovely helpful staff with nice food; we had a very comfortable stay.

Our thanks go to the hard-working committee, who give up their time for us to have such a good weekend, we are so fortunate to have these unique times full of friendship and fun and seeing old, and also making new, friends.

Here's to next year's dinner for another great weekend.





'Mentioned in WRAC Association Dispatches' replaced the system of considering regional Branch members for the award of a Certificate of Appreciation in 2014. Details of individuals awarded a 'Mention in WRAC Association Dispatches' will be published in Lioness, thus enabling all members to read about the contribution an individual has made, either to their Branch or to the Association. The method of nomination for an individual remains via Branch Secretaries to Area Chairman for regional Branch members, or direct to Association HQ for those who are HQ Branch members (i.e. not a member of a geographic Branch). All nominations are to be submitted for approval at a meeting of the Council of the WRAC Association (held twice per year).

Joan Ford Salisbury Branch South & South West Area

Joan is a life member of the Association, was a member of Salisbury Branch and Area secretary for over 15 or so years. She has been Area Secretary serving under Major McIntyre, Lt Col Trout and now myself. And I am sure that both Lt Col Trout and Major McIntyre would agree with me that this is a well deserved recommendation. She has seen the area flourish and slow down as time has gone by. She has for many years arranged, organised and prepared the paperwork and the meal for the Area AGM every year, with help from her husband. Joan has a wealth of knowledge on the Area's Association history and of Salisbury Branch before its closure. She has attended many events promoting the Association and continues to offer support to the members of the Association as well as other Associations in the Area of Salisbury.

During the past 3/4 years that I have been Area Chairman/Co-Ordinator of the Southern and South West Area, Joan has been a great support to myself. She has been able to give me information on some of the surviving branches and has the history. Joan has been a great support to our Area and offered advice when I and others have needed. I feel very strongly that she should receive, or be considered for, a WRAC Association MiD due to her length of service and time she has given to the Association and the local branch at its time of opening. Joan's decision to resign has been met with sadness, but we fully support her decision. Joan will be missed by all and feel that this is the only way we can thank her for her service and years of contribution to the Association.

Sharon Bingham



WRAC ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP GIFT VOUCHERS

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

Why not give the gift of WRAC Association Membership?

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

UK Annual Membership £10
Overseas Annual Membership £15

VETERANS' GATEWAY

The first point of contact for veterans seeking support

"We put veterans and their families in touch with the organisations best placed to help with the information, advice and support they need – from healthcare and housing to employability, finances, personal relationships and more".

Veterans' Gateway is made up of a consortium of organisations and Armed Forces charities, including The Royal British Legion, SSAFA – the Armed Forces charity, Poppyscotland, Combat Stress and Connect Assist (and ourselves, the WRAC Association).

"Our connection with additional key referral partners and information organisations – both within and outside the Armed Forces sector – means we can get you to the right organisation who can help".

Funded by The Armed Forces Covenant, this group has come together formally to deliver a service to help the Armed Forces community. So if you, or someone you know, is looking for help please point them in the direction of Veterans Gateway. They can be contacted by telephone (0808-802-1212) or email (via their website 'contact form'). For more information look at their website: <https://www.veteransgateway.org.uk/>

Obituaries - Their Final Salute

Barbara Danter Leicester and Nottingham Branch

It is with the greatest of sadness that I write to inform you of the passing of Barbara Danter. The family have promised to send me a photograph that they would like using, and a few words so we can write an obituary for her.

CBM Munro MBE



As a young teenager and in the early days of WW2, Barbara joined the Junior Air Corps. With two brothers in the RAF you would think that that would be her destiny. Always one to do the unexpected, at the age of 17 Barbara was accepted into the Auxiliary Territorial Service and couldn't have been happier. With suitcase in hand, she made her way to the local railway station along with six other girls from Nottingham. They were taken to Glen Parva Barracks in Leicester, for a six-week training course. Following training, she became a member of the Royal Engineers Army Post Office as a postal sorter, which just happened to be based in her home town of Nottingham. They had to sort 1,000 items an hour by hand into their allocated 48 pigeon holes on round the clock shifts letters, packages and parcels. She really loved her vital work, sending morale-boosting mail to "the boys overseas" as she always used to say - Soldiers and airmen in all theatres of war.

In 1947 the Home Postal Centre was moved to Sutton Coldfield, with the ATS being billeted at the lovely Packington Park near Coventry. They weren't there for too long, before being sent to a holding camp in Hereford and then on to Welbeck Abbey, North Nottingham and home (then) to the Duke and Duchess of Portland. The Duchess was particularly generous to the ATS there and Barbara had fond memories of her. Half of Welbeck Abbey was used by the Army as a college for Officers and whilst there, she became a telephone switchboard operator, another job she thoroughly enjoyed.

She treasured her every moment in the Army and her only regret was that she didn't stay in long enough!

When her husband died in 1987, she found her way to an Army Postal Association, the Royal British Legion and the WRAC Association in Leicester. In early November, on several occasions, she was out selling poppies in her much-loved uniform and telling her stories of times during the war. She was also a regular at the Remembrance parade at the Cenotaph in London every November marching side by side with her ATS and WRAC friends, old and new. Her life in the Army gave her an interesting retirement.

Ann Danter



In 1944, at the age of 17 Barbara was accepted into the ATS and with suitcase in hand, she made her way to the local railway station along with six other girls from Nottingham. They were taken to Leicester, Glen Parva Barracks, for a six week training course. Following training, she became a member of the Royal Engineers Army Post Office as a postal sorter which just happened to be based in her home town of Nottingham. They had to sort 1000 items an hour by hand into their allocated 48 pigeon holes in round the clock shifts letters, packages and parcels. She really loved her vital work, sending morale boosting mail to "the boys overseas" as she always used to say. Soldiers and airmen in all theatres of war – the navy had their own posties. In 1947 the Home Postal Centre was moved to Sutton Coldfield, being billeted at Packington Park. They weren't there too long, before being sent to a holding camp in Hereford and then on to Welbeck Abbey, North Nottingham and home (then) to the Duke and Duchess of Portland. Half of Welbeck Abbey was used by the Army as a college for Officers and whilst there, she became a telephone switchboard operator, another job she thoroughly enjoyed.

She treasured her every moment in the forces and her only regret was that she didn't stay in long enough!

When her husband died in 1987, she found her way to an Army Postal Association, the Royal British Legion and the WRAC Association in Leicester. Her life in the Army gave her an interesting retirement.

She became a Committee member and Secretary of the Army Post Association and each year they had many happy reunions in Llandudno. She became the Chairman of the local Women's section of the Royal British Legion and well into her late 80s, she regularly went on the train for the monthly meetings of the WRAC Association in Leicester. All of which she contributed to with dedication and enthusiasm and gave her many happy times, memories and good friends.

She was also a regular at the Remembrance parade at the Cenotaph in London every November for many a year with her ATS and WRAC friends. The last couple of years she attended in a wheelchair but she would never consider not going to show her respect and to march side by side with friends old, and new. She loved being her uniform and was so proud of all the things we was able to do and all the people she met.

Cathy Munro

Mrs Mary Frances nee Lloyd

I am notifying your organisation of the death on 26th October 2018 of Mrs. MARY FRANCES HUGHES, aged 100 years, who served from 1942 to 1946, as PRIVATE MARY F. LLOYD ATS 559(M) H.A.A.Battery and R.A.O.C.

Mary was one of 4 sisters, all serving during World War 2. Her father, George Lloyd, served during the first World War being awarded the Military Medal having lost a leg during a rescue mission.

Mary was a 'predictor' on a gun emplacement on the south coast. She made many lasting friendships and recalled her years of service as a most exceptional time in her life. I remember she used to subscribe to the magazine the Lioness, and attended all the ATS reunions around Britain up until about her eighties. She lived in Longridge, Preston, Lancashire.

Mrs. Margaret Regan (Niece of the above)

Elizabeth Mary Bustard (nee Sanderson)

11 September 1928 – 13 August 2018



Elizabeth was born in the small West Yorkshire village of Bramham; she came from a large family, with 6 brothers and sisters. Apart from her war service she lived in the village all of her life.

After leaving the then CofE School at age 14, Elizabeth entered domestic service as kitchen maid at Stockeld Park, at the time a nursing home during WW2. Her next job, working in the fields, continued until Elizabeth was 16 ½, when she ran away to join the Army towards the latter end of the War. Elizabeth served with the ATS as a cook, stationed in Gloucestershire, and also Bardney in Lincolnshire where she met her future husband Reg; she was demobbed on the 26 August 1948. They married in Bramham church on the 11th September 1948, which was also her 20th Birthday. Shortly after her marriage they moved to their new home in the village where she lived for the rest of her life.

Elizabeth and Reg had 3 children; Kenneth, Lydia and Robert, who also upon marrying between them gave her 5 grandchildren, 6 great-grandchildren and 2 great-great-grandchildren. Whilst her family and extended family meant everything to Elizabeth; she was known for the no-nonsense advice she gave to family and friends, she also retained her love of service life. She became an active member of the Boston Spa Women's section of the Royal British Legion where she held every position bar President;

becoming a standard bearer at the annual remembrance service for 30 years and continuing to make and sell poppies until her mid 80's. She was also a dedicated member of the ATS for over 40 years, including when it eventually amalgamated with the WRAC. Elizabeth looked forward to attending the monthly meetings in Leeds and the yearly conferences held all over the country where she could reminisce with her ex-colleagues and friends.

Elizabeth was a fearless defender and spokeswoman of those less able to defend and speak for themselves, a village stalwart, a friend to many, and beloved matriarch of her family who will miss her dearly.

Mr R Bustard (son)

Mary Daniels 1929 – 2018

I'm writing to inform you that one of our (Hereford) members has sadly passed away. Mary Daniels DOB: 14/07/1929 has been a member of our Branch since I believe 1992. She lived at Kempton Avenue, Hereford and her service dates were 04/03/1949 to April 1976. She was decorated with her LSGC Medal and her last rank held was Sergeant.

I myself didn't have the pleasure of meeting Mary but have heard from other members of how lovely a lady she was. I asked her friend Miss Vi Brown to write a short eulogy of Mary (which is below).

*Lynda Armstrong
Hereford branch Secretary*

Mary enlisted in the WRAC/TA in 1949. She liked the army environment, so after 2 years she decided to become a full-time servicewoman and signed a Type R engagement. She served in various TA units in Wales until the disbandment of the TA in 1967.

Then Mary signed a normal regular engagement and was posted to Chester, Krefeldt and Guildford. She terminated her service in 1976, whilst serving as Mess Caterer in the Sergeants Mess at the WRAC Centre.

Mary was a keen sportswoman and represented the Army at both cricket and table tennis. After demob she became a civil servant working for the RAF in Hereford until her retirement.

After retirement she became a volunteer at both the hospital and the hospice, serving for 19 years. She then became an enthusiastic golfer, spending many happy hours searching for her ball in the rough, in the bunkers or in the lake. Nobody explained that the most direct was to the flag was up the fairway.

Vi Brown

Lucy Bowyer (nee Evans)
1921 - 2nd November 2018, age 97

Ali Brown recently attended the funeral of one of my branch ATS ladies, Lucy Bowyer who died on 2nd November aged 97. I told her that Lucy had been in the Ack Ack whilst in the ATS and on numerous occasions had told us various bits of what she did. I had suggested to Lucy perhaps she give me something for the Lioness especially as we are coming up to our Centenary of the Association and she had recently done so.

Lucy had been our Branch Standard Bearer for 19 years and after carrying our Standard at 173 various events, she handed it over in December 2007 to our current Standard Bearer. Item on this event was in Lioness 1/2008 with photos. Lucy was a prolific note and diary keeper (except when told she couldn't for security reasons lol). She also visited local schools and spoke about her time in the ATS and the Association.

Chris Powell

[Editor – a shortened version of Lucy's recollections are reproduced in the Reminiscences section; the longer document being shared with the Wonderful Women book team for consideration there as well.]

Lucy Bowyer joined the ATS in June 1941, initially training at Lancaster and then moving to Park Hall Camp, Oswestry where she completed her Ack Ack training, and she also met Charles who she went on to marry in 1942. From Oswestry she was posted to Lynwood Camp, Paisley before joining 448 Battery/132 Regt., HAA mixed RA. Postings to 487/137 Regt HAA in Ellesmere Port and Whetstone, London followed. By the end of 1945 Lucy had been promoted to Sergeant and had served in both Antwerp and Germany before she left the service.

Lucy settled in Shropshire in 1980 where she quickly joined the local branch of the WRAC Association where she took up the office of Treasurer and also became the Standard Bearer. As Standard Bearer, Lucy represented the Branch on numerous occasions including attending the 45th Anniversary Celebrations of the end of WW11 in Antwerp, September 1989. She continued to carry the Standard until 2007 when she handed over the duties to our present Standard Bearer, Sandra Davies.

A stalwart member of the Branch, Lucy attended all our monthly meetings until 3 years ago when she moved into a Residential Home some miles away. We continued to include her in any suitable trips arranged by the Branch and were very happy to see her at our Annual Cream Tea Outing in September.

Lucy passed away on 20th November 2018 and the Branch had the honour of providing the Guard at her funeral. She will be missed and remembered with great affection.

Ali McGowan

Hilda Dakin / Slater (nee Scott)
1927 - 2018



Hilda Dakin was a member of the Shropshire Branch of the WRAC Association who sadly passed away, suddenly, on 5th August 2018.

Hilda joined the ATS in 1944 as a pay clerk and rose to the rank of Corporal. Initially training at Normanton Barracks, Derbyshire she was attached to the Sherwood Forresters.

Originally from Inveraray, Scotland, Hilda was an only child bought up by her Grandmother. She met and married Arthur Slater in 1946 and had 2 sons. Sadly, Arthur passed away and she later met and married Harry Dakin.

She settled in Leegomery, Shropshire and was a member of the Shropshire Branch for many years. Recently Hilda moved to the Lakeview Residential Home in Brookside, Telford where she passed away aged 91 years.

Ali McGowan

Ellen Louise (Nell) Cox, ATS
26/6/1922 - 23/10/2018

One of the original members of Suffolk Branch when we formed. Joined the ATS in 1943 and became a Fire Engine driver and worked on the pumps. She also taught others to drive. She served until after the war and loved to share her stories with us at meetings. Always fun and a generous, lovely lady who will be sorely missed.

Her large family adored her, and several generations were at her funeral. Two members of the Branch attended her funeral on 8 November at St John's church Felixstowe. The church was beautifully decorated for Remembrance week which made the lovely service even more poignant.

She was a great supporter of the Branch and always made a huge effort to attend our meetings until it no longer physically possible. One day in 2017 we collected her and took her out for lunch. Nell was still full of stories and fun but sadly it was the last time we were to see her.

RIP Nell.

Liz Ives
Suffolk branch

Major Kathleen Hughes MBE 1927 – 7th December 2018



Kathleen was born in 27 Woodfield Terrace [south Wales] and was one of 10 children, 3 boys and 7 girls. She left school at 14 years of age and worked in Treforest at Standard Telephones.

Kath joined the army in her early twenties in 1950 after a visit to the recruiting office with a friend who was re-signing. The recruitment office told her, "you look fit, I'm sure you would make a good officer", so she signed there and then. When she returned home, her dad gave her 6 months because she never stuck at anything. Kath went in as a private and came out as a major after 32 years of service in with the Women's Royal Army Corps. She served her country in Gibraltar, Singapore, UK, Hong Kong and Germany. She was a strong dedicated lady, straight and to the point, with a tough exterior but a tender heart.

Kath received an MBE in 1976 and went to Buckingham Palace often, meeting members of the royal family. Kath also received the Long Service Good Conduct Medal and multiple Campaign Medals from around the world during her Service.

At the end of her Service she was stationed in London as a recruiting officer. Kath was a keen traveller and remembered well taking a tanker to Freemantle, visiting Morocco and journeying throughout Europe. She said she had a wonderful life and did not regret anything.

Kath was very patriotic and loved coming home to Trehafod and staying with her sister Margaret. She loved her nieces and nephews and the children in her street who loved her back in return. Kath played hockey and netball in the Army and cricket even though she hated it.

Pastor David Jones

I first met Kath in 1992, when I travelled to Cardiff for my first Wales and the West Reunion. Kath completed a full career in the WRAC and it would be true to say that Kath was the epitome of a member of our Corps. Her conversation (as well as her manner) was gentle and there were few more resolute than Kath. She rarely missed an Association function to which she, as a member

of Cardiff Branch, was invited. Our friendship grew with each Wales and West Area function, as well as the Association AGMs, which we both attended. Added to that we often sat together at the Officers' Dining Club in London.

Kath was a founder member of the WRAC Dinner Club. I joined in 2000 and we met up at the weekend at Tillington Hall Stafford. Being a newbie, I was delighted to see Kath there. She made a point of greeting new members and putting them at their ease, a habit which continued with every DC she attended.

Kath was blessed with several siblings, nephews, nieces, great nephews and great nieces, all of whom she was inordinately proud. She told me on one occasion, that the last thing she wanted to do was to leave them bequests after her death but would rather "give it with a warm hand". An eminently sensible and typical "Kathism". Kath was hugely popular with members of the WRAC Community and will be missed by many.

Maggie Purkis

"Dear Carol

Thank you for your kind thoughts concerning Kathleen's passing away. It's very strange to look over to her home now and realise it's empty and she's not there, but she is at peace now and she was always telling me what a wonderful life she had led, wonderful friends and no regrets in life at all; and life must go on.

I have enclosed an order of service for you. She had a lovely send-off; she would have been pleased.

Pat, Ken and family"

Lt. Col Margaret Geraldine (Gerry) Fahy, ATS/WRAC 7th March 1924 – 25th November 2018



I have known Gerry for several years as an NCO, RSM and Lt. Col. She was strict but fair and always hard-working with a sense of humour when dealing with people, both on and off duty. She was admired and respected by all who served with her and a very loyal friend.

Gerry kept in touch with many people on leaving the WRAC whose lives were enriched by her friendship.

In recent years her health deteriorated, including her memory. I was happy she was able to attend my 90th birthday celebrations two years ago. She passed away in a care home in Malvern on 25th December 2018 and will be missed by family, friends and comrades.

Duty Done Gerry, RIP.

Joanne Bedford



Gerry was born on 7th March 1924, in Belfast, the first child of John and Eileen. She often mentioned that she became the eldest of a large family of nine sisters and brothers.

In the early years of the Second World War, she joined the Army when just 16 years old, telling them she was 18. She told the story many times later of her first rather dangerous journey on a troopship from Scotland to Aden. Gerry served in Kenya, Palestine, Egypt and Cyprus during all of the troubles in the 1950s. After long service and elevation to Lieutenant Colonel, she retired from the Army in 1977, although continued to do some work for the MOD. Later on she wrote that she had tried to live up to the WRAC motto – 'Gentle in Manner, Resolute in Deed'.

A few years before retiring, Gerry and Elaine Anton, had bought a house close to the Malvern Hills, so eventually she did settle in Malvern. Gerry travelled quite a bit, to Malta (where she had a second home) and Cyprus, also to London, where she attended the Victoria Cross and George Cross Association meeting. Locally she was involved in the British Legion and did case work for SSAFA.

Gerry had an avid interest in art and attended local painting groups. The English Speaking Union and the Women's Institute were some of her many activities. She had an active social life and at home, where there were regular drinks parties.

Gerry was a great animal lover, in particular cats. The cat flap was never closed and her generous supplies of food led to quite a few neighbourhood cats moving in permanently.

Gerry was still driving a car until two years ago, and if anyone doubted her ability, she mentioned the fact that she had been a driving instructor at some stage in the Army.

Gerry fought bravely for the next two years but at 4pm on Sunday 25th November, she finally let go.

Permission to use this Tribute kindly given by Elisabeth and Alan Smith

Gerry was a committed and consistent supporter of the WRAC Association and served on Council for many years and was a keen member of Hereford Branch. I have received many tributes from those who served on Council with her over the years and those who knew her at Hereford Branch, and all remember Gerry with fondness and respect. Gerry was so proud of serving in the ATS and the WRAC and was truly representative of a professional Officer and Soldier.

Gerry will be missed by all those who knew her.

Ali Brown

Dorothy Hope Hughes Auxiliary Territorial Service 1923 – 2018

FINAL POSTINGS - The Governor announces with regret the deaths of:

No 163 IP DOROTHY HOPE HUGHES
AUXILIARY TERRITORIAL SERVICE
DOB: 7 OCT 23, DOE: 9 MAR 09

Dorothy died in the Infirmary on Fri 7 Dec 18.

Her funeral was held on Wed 16 Jan 19 at 1400 hrs in the Wren Chapel

Dorothy was born in Swansea on 7 October 1923. She joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service on 24 December 1941 and after a period of six weeks initial training at Wrexham she was sent on attachment to join 450 Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery based in London. In 1944 the Battery was moved to Camber Sands near Dover to counter the V1 attacks and later in early 1945 she was moved to Bude as part of the Army Operational Research Group and worked in recording vans on various AA gun sites testing close proximity fuses for use against V2 Rockets, and then from February 1945 she assisted in radar trials. She was eventually discharged from the Army after the war on 25 April 1946 having been promoted to the rank of Sergeant.

On leaving the Army she attended a secretarial course in Southampton and then joined an agricultural engineering firm in Great Tew, Oxfordshire, where she worked until 1951. Later she decided to become a teacher, and from 1969 to 1982 she

worked at Woodstock Primary School. Thereafter she moved into voluntary work and undertook a number of roles including being an archivist for Kidlington Historical Society and collecting for Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal. She also assisted with the collating of the Kidlington calendar and also helped out in the Bodleian Library in Oxford, recording text books for visually impaired students and, for a period of time she also helped run a charity shop.

Dorothy joined the Royal Hospital, Chelsea, on 9 March 2009 and was posted to Long Ward 21 in the newly constructed Margaret Thatcher Infirmary. Her arrival marked a historic moment being that she was one of two females to be admitted for the first time into the Royal Hospital Chelsea.

Dorothy attended over one hundred and forty separate events over the course of the next five years and she was particularly honoured to be a part of the In-Pensioner's Guard of Honour at Cadogan Pier on the occasion of Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee Thames Flotilla celebrations in June 2012. The following month she was part of the Royal Hospital's marching contingent at the Opening Ceremony of the 2012 London Olympic Games, and in April 2013 she was selected to be part of the lining party at the steps to St Paul's Cathedral for the funeral of the late Baroness Thatcher. Dorothy died in the Infirmary on Friday 7 December 2018 aged 95. Our prayers and thoughts are with Dorothy, her family and her friends.

Lt Col Anne Bray 6th November 1932 - 18th December 2018



Order of Service (precis)

Entrance Music – 'Greensleeves' (Regimental Slow March of the WRAC)

Introduction and Prayers

Hymn – Lord of All Hopefulness

Reading:

Perhaps if we could see
The splendour of the land
To which our loved are called from you and me
We'd understand.

Perhaps if we could hear
The welcome they receive
From old familiar voices – all so dear
We would not grieve.

Perhaps if we could know
The reason why they went
We'd smile - and wipe away the tears that flow
And wait content.

Eulogy – Sue Westlake

Lt Col Anne Bray died 18th December 2018. She served in the 1950s through to the 1980s and was AIPT, 2IC of the WRAC Centre and Commander WRAC NE District and SW District. 13 WRAC were present, along with Sharon Baker-Joyce and the Association National Standard.

It is a great privilege for me as a Life Vice-President of the WRAC Association, and as a friend, to have been asked to give this tribute to one of our Corps, highly respected, Senior Officers.

Anne was born in Ewell, Surrey, the daughter of an optician and the youngest of three children. A 10-year gap between Anne and her older siblings, Carol and Ian, meant she was the apple of her father's eye, though sadly he died when she was only 12. It is lovely that her niece, nephew and grandniece could be here today, all having travelled some distance.

Anne was dispatched to Cheltenham Ladies College aged just 7 and on completion of her education there, she was sent to Mon Fertile on Lake Geneva in Switzerland and Les Diablerets in the French Alps for the winter skiing season. In case that wasn't enough a spell at the Lucy Clayton College in London to learn deportment, flower arranging, and similar refinements followed. As you can tell, Anne's mother was determined that Anne should be suitably groomed and made aware of the required etiquette for a well brought up young lady. After she was 'finished' Anne went to Queens Secretarial College in London and obtained her Shorthand/Typing and Bookkeeping qualifications in December 1950 – she was still only 18 at this point.

In January 1951 Anne joined the Women's Royal Army Corps serving a mandatory period in the ranks (she attained the rank of LCpl) before embarking on her 9-month long Commissioning Course just down the road from here at Hindhead. She was extremely privileged to be commissioned by Major General HRH The Princess Royal on 2nd October 1952. Anne's Army career spanned 35 years and was a source of much happiness and pride to her. She was a Regimental Officer through and through, a Soldier's soldier and her postings reflected this. The welfare and wellbeing of the servicewomen and Officers under her command were her primary concern and she would always go the extra mile for them.

I first met Anne when I was a young Captain at the WRAC Centre in Guildford in 1975 – she was Second in Command, which meant she was deputy to the Commandant and so a very formidable person! I did not work directly for her but enjoyed her camaraderie and company in the Officer's Mess.

One of her responsibilities at Guildford was the WRAC Staff Band, the only female band in the Army and therefore much in demand. Not surprisingly they miraculously appeared at Liphook's Annual Carnival in 1976, thanks to Anne, and stole the show!

Her notable postings were as an instructor at the WO and NCO Wing, which prepared and trained women for their promotion through the various ranks, and she served in an administrative role in Northern Ireland at the height of the troubles. This was the only time she served off mainland UK. As a Major she commanded two of the largest WRAC Companies: at the Central Ordnance Depot Bicester, where she was responsible for several hundred WRAC store women and secondly, 12 Company WRAC at Mill Hill which was the Army's Postal Depot. Anne's servicewomen and officers knew exactly where they stood – she was down to earth, straight talking, but very kind, and as a result was hugely respected. As Assistant Inspector Physical Training at the Army School of PT, she career managed, posted, visited and administered the 70+ WRAC PTIs who were spread throughout the UK and NI. She enjoyed this appointment very much and still occasionally attended the PTI reunions long after she retired. On promotion to Lieutenant Colonel, Anne was posted to HQ NE District in York, and then to HQ SW District at Bulford in the appointment as Assistant Director WRAC making her ultimately responsible for all servicewomen in all the units serving that District. A huge task.

Throughout her service career Anne would return, when she could, at weekends to visit her mother who was by now a widow and had moved down from London to live at Burgh Hill Place in Liphook, where Anne cared for her until she died in 1975. Anne's great friend Joyce Edwards would often join them. The bungalow had a very large garden and Anne worked hard to keep the lawnmowed with her trusty Mountfield as well as tending the huge vegetable patch. She was a prodigious vegetable eater and the silver service stewardess in the Officer's Mess invariably had to return to the kitchen to have her vegetable salver refilled after Anne had been served her portion!

Anne retired from the WRAC in January 1985 and moved back to Liphook permanently. Joyce, who had retired the previous November, came to live with her and this was the start of a long and happy retirement for them both. Anne's sister, Carol, also settled in Liphook in 1993 until, with failing health, she moved to Yorkshire to be nearer her daughter Madeleine. Anne and Joyce were loyal supporters of the WRAC Association and Anne was a stalwart member of the Aldershot Branch ending up on the Committee as Treasurer for several years. They were both members of Liphook Royal British Legion and Anne was still selling poppies last November. They also enjoyed active membership of the University of the Third Age.

Joyce joined Liphook Golf Club in 1991 and after much badgering from Joyce, Anne finally took up golf and joined the Club in 1996. She took her golf seriously and Jillian tells me she bought a new driver as late as last year and was still booking lessons, although she had definitely turned into a fair-weather golfer. She did, however, play in the Festive Foursomes the week before she died and enjoyed the splendid Christmas lunch that followed.

Anne spent a number of years on the Ladies' Committee as Treasurer, a role she was well versed in. The 'Colonels', as they were affectionately known at the Club, enjoyed many happy years playing golf and going on golfing holidays, both home and abroad, with their select little group called the Wheatsheaf Wanderers.

In 1997, mindful of the future, they decided to downsize and made the move to the newly built Childerstone Close in the centre of Liphook. Jillian and Graham moved in, across the road, a couple of months later and this was the start of an enduring friendship which brought many shared happy times - holidays in Burgundy along with Jillian's family, and Christmas Days were spent together. The 'Colonels' proposed Graham for Liphook Golf Club and, as many of you here already know, they finally persuaded Jillian to take up the game, nurturing her along the way. They were both delighted when their protégé became Ladies' Captain in 2011 but by that time Joyce's health was failing and her passing in 2013 underlined just how many close friends Anne had the support of, both at the Club and locally in Liphook. She continued to 'plough her own furrow', as she had always done, but with increased support from Jillian and Graham, as by now she was well and truly one of the family, and there was none so proud as Anne when in November 2017 Jillian became the first woman in 95 years to become Club Captain. She even kept Jillian's Mother in Dublin up to date with press cuttings and notes on her progress throughout the year.

To those closest to her Anne was an outstandingly loyal and trusted friend. Despite her rather reserved nature, she had a wonderful, gentle sense of humour and a sharp wit. Her warmth, genuineness and sincerity will ensure that she is remembered with the greatest of respect and affection.

Anne - we salute you!

Hymn – I Vow to Thee, My Country
Reading – St John's Gospel 14: 1 – 6

Address – Rev Sue Wing
Prayers and Collect of the WRAC

Hymn – Jerusalem
Commendation
Blessing

Recessional music – 'Sweet Lass of Richmond Hill' (WRAC
Regimental Quick March)
Committal



LAST POST

ADAMS, (nee Myers), Mrs Brenda, of Rudgeley, Staffs, on 11th Dec 2018 (WRAC)
BATES, Miss Phyllis, of Loughborough, on 12th Feb 2019 (WRAC)
BENSON, (nee Larson), Mrs Mary, of Cobham, Surrey, on 27th December 2018 (ATS)
BOWYER, (nee Evans), Mrs Lucy, of Telford, on 2nd November 20`18 (ATS)
BRAY, Anne, of Liphook, Hampshire, on 18th December 2018
BURNS, (nee Findlay), Mrs Lucy of Aberdeen (ATS)
BUSTARD, (nee Sanderson), Mrs Elizabeth of Wetherby, August 2018 (ATS)
COSTAIN, (nee Fauvel), Mrs Maggie, of Worthing, on 28th October 2018 (WRAC)
DAVIES, (nee Wild), Mrs Betty, of Woking, in January 2018 (ATS)
DEARLE, (nee Beavan), Mrs Brenda, of Eastbourne, on 2nd June 2018 (ATS)
HARRIES, Mrs Kay, of Dumfries, on 19th December 2017 (ATS)
HUGHES, (nee Lloyd), Mrs Mary Francis, of Preston, on 26th October 2018 (ATS)
MCGRATH, Alma Mary, of Newtown Powys. (WRAC)
SANDY, Mrs Margaret, of Leicester on 14th October 2018 (ATS)
SEABROOK, (nee Doughty) Mrs Edith, of Darlington (WRAC)
SHELLEY, (nee Hardicre), Mrs Josephine, of Rochdale. (ATS)
SILVER, (nee Ather). Mrs Olive, of Ormskirk on 31st July 2018 (ATS)
STEPHENSON, (nee Carter), Mrs Carol, of Broadstone, Dorset on 15th October 2018 (ATS)
THOMSON, Miss Helen, of Aberdeen, on 28th December 2018 (ATS)
TIPLADY, (nee David), Mrs Dorothy, of Hull, on 29th October 2018 (ATS)
WALLACE, (nee Tilley), Mrs Grace (Lola), of Barton on Sea, Hampshire, on 13th December 2019 (QANS)
WYLIE, (nee Black), Mrs Isobel, of Glasgow on 24th March 2018 (ATS)



Supporting Women who Served



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.

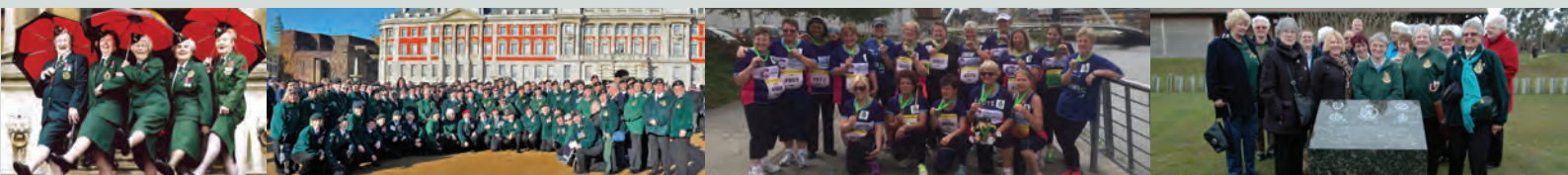
Many members already make regular and one off donations or are kind enough to leave legacies which help the WRAC Association to continue its work, for which we are very grateful. As the future of the Benevolent Fund is secure, if you are considering making a donation or leaving a legacy please consider 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



IN MEMORIAM

During Financial Year 2018 kind donations were made by individuals and Branches in memory of the following personnel:

The Late M Foulds

The Late Eileen Proctor MBE TD

The Late Phyllis Maude Ellen Beames

The Late Betty Metcalfe MBE

The Late Merville Pidgeon

The Late Margaret Alice Gallafent

The Late Kathleen Eastham

LEGACIES

During Financial Year 2018 the Association very much appreciated the legacies received from the following, which varied from £200 to £260,000, every penny of which will ensure the continued work of the Association:

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

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