

LIONESSES



BRIGADIER (RETD) SHIRLEY NIELD CBE





WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

(Incorporating the QMAAC & ATS Comrades Association)

Registered Charity No. 206184, founded in 1919

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Message from the Vice President

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.

Our Centenary year has continued apace, and I would like to start this Foreword by thanking each and every one of you who has organised and supported all of the national and local events. I am extremely proud of the way we have celebrated our Centenary and how we have brought the achievements of the ATS and the WRAC into the public domain.

Highlights of the last 6 months include being part of over 200 of us descending on York for the annual 10 kms event; the publication of the 100 Wonderful Women Book; the celebration of the CGHQ Centenary including the recognition of the contribution of the ATS to Bletchley Park; seeing our National Standard, once again, on parade at the Festival of Remembrance in the Royal Albert Hall and the issuing of the Commemorative Stamp Cover in partnership with BFPS. The generosity of all of you never ceases to amaze me and your fundraising efforts, including for the WRAC Statue, have been incredible. I can now report that the WRAC Statue currently has feet, legs and a set of No 2s; she is being built from the bottom up. The Book and the Stamp Cover have both proved popular and are selling really well. All of these are marks of our success and I can only continue to thank all those individuals who have made it all happen. I hope to see as many of you as possible at the Unveiling of the WRAC Statue and AGM event at the NMA on 21st March 2020. This will close off our Centenary year.

I was in Guildford for Remembrance this year, and those of us who attended the Service were thoroughly spoilt by the Borough and made to feel really welcome. I have written a short article on the day for this edition of the Lioness.

On a broader front, the Association is now starting to make its mark building on the growing interest in female veterans. This interest is not only from the general public, but also from within Government. The Office for Veteran Affairs has been created, along with the Cobseo Cluster Group for Serving Females and Veterans. As a charity we exist solely to support women who have served in the Army and thus we have a wealth of experience through our membership and benevolence activities. It is this experience that I am taking with me into these

groups, and the current interest levels and the build-up of momentum will result in the improvement of support for female veterans. In addition, we continue to build on our relationships with the Association of WRNS, the QARANC Association and the RAF Association. If we can operate together with one voice, we are so much stronger.

I must reiterate my thanks to our HQ Team of Penny, Julia, Julie and Tanya who continue to work tirelessly to promote the Association and enable all of the events you have enjoyed.

As I look back on this Centenary year, I continue to believe very strongly that in our role as an Association representing women who served and are still serving, we have so much to be proud of, and so much more to contribute.

Ali Brown

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Front Cover: Brig (Retd) Shirley Neild CBE
Back Cover: Remembrances, York 10k



Well you have all done it again – outdone every expectation of what your Centenary year may look like. It truly has been an honour to work with you all and to try and ensure that all the wonderful achievements you ladies made during your time of service (no matter when, in which branch, and/or for how long) has been appropriately marked.

The National Army Museum's 'Rise of the Lionesses' exhibition continued well into October, being visited by all the many people to visit the Museum – old, young, service personnel (both serving and veterans), schools, clubs, etc, etc. I know that some of you and your branches also made the trip to London. The portraits painted over August and September will be fitting and lasting memorials to the various 'generations' who served in the ATS and WRAC. The 'Behind the Scenes' evening certainly got you all talking about the various bits and pieces they put out, and your recollections of them. A HUGE thank you once again to the National Army Museum.

Remembrance-tide was its usual mix of honouring those who lost their lives serving their country, those who served but survived, and those who continue to serve. It was wonderful to catch a glimpse of Sharon Baker-Joyce and your National Standard at the Festival of Remembrance – a worthy recognition of your collective service and the Association's Centenary. Your photos show the respect you give and the joy you share when you get together to 'support women who serve/served'.

Throughout the year we have continued to work with Curious PR to raise the profile of the whole Association, including the Ben. Fund, and help increase Membership. All of these have been achieved through a variety of methods – including printed and social media, television and radio. The collaborative work we have undertaken, in conjunction with the events held, means we have seen an overall increase of nearly 300 'new' Association Members – hopefully you have seen an increase within your branches as well. A fuller report is within.

As you will see later in the magazine (and may have seen on social media), we have recently said good-bye to your last-but-one WRAC Director, Brig. Shirley Nield and to Anne Robson, the oldest known surviving ATS lady, in Edinburgh. We are aware of at least half-a-dozen ex-ATS who are over 100, but you may know more. We are particularly keen to find the oldest surviving ex-ATS ladies (whether currently an Association Member or not) so that we, the Association, and The Nation can appropriately honour you/them, our female veterans. So, let us know who you, or they, are so we can 'support these women who served' in the same way they supported their country through service.

Additionally, we are aware that over 154,000 women served across the ATS and WRAC up to 1992, of which just over 3,000 are Association Members. We would love to know if you have any ideas for how we might spread the word even more, especially to the just under 150k that served but are not Members.

It has become obvious that events are a great way of getting you together and extending the reach of 'support' for each other. To that end we are looking at how we in HQ might enable that more, outside of 3-yearly Grand Reunions. In the meantime, we all have the forthcoming AGM and WRAC Statue unveiling to look forward to. If you haven't booked yet then drop Tanya a line – however, the buffet lunch is currently oversubscribed, with a waiting list (although the NMA's own café will be open as usual).

The WRAC Statue is well under way with construction, ready for her official Dedication in March. The sculptor is also preparing a mould so that a quantity of small copies can be made available for purchase – please see later in the magazine for more details. All we need to know for now is if you might be interested in a copy in due course. The 100 Wonderful Women book has proven very popular – if you haven't got your copy yet see the Memorabilia page later in the magazine.

I extend a HUGE thank you to each and every one of you; to all the Area Co-ordinators and Branch chairs/secretaries/treasurers/co-ordinators/links/whoever; to the Officers (in particular Ali for all her help, support, advice and time), Trustees and Council; and to all the staff who work here in the HQ office – namely Tanya, Julie and Julia. The Association really is a 'team' in which there are no 'I's'.

Penny Muxworthy
editor@wracassociation.org.uk

SERVE
SUPPORTING WOMEN WHO / SERVED

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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.

HELEN JEPHCOTE Scotland & Northern Ireland Area Co-ordinator



When I was 17 years old I went to the Army Careers Office in Glasgow, accompanied by my parents, to join up. The recruiters rejected me stating that I was too young and had no life experience. My dad was a SSgt in the REME so I was interested in the Army. I was devastated that I could not follow in his footsteps.

I had applied for, and was accepted into, the Civil Service looking forward to a long career travelling the world, however, I was employed by HMRC so travelling was not an option. I continued with my fitness and yoga classes, normal life resumed and I was busy and happy at home. In the meantime, my older sister was at secretarial college in Glasgow and had friends who were in the 'terries' and said she was going to join. I tagged along and so did our younger sister. We passed the tests and medicals and were taken on strength on 4th February 1979 in 32 (Scottish) Signal Regiment (Volunteers), 52 (Lowland) Signal Squadron as WRAC to become Data Telegraphists - Pte Anderson (x3) embarked on a Reservist career. In our first year we were able to attend our recruit's course at Guildford and then Class 3 DTG course almost in the same year and attended all and every weekend we could. As the years progressed my sisters married, had family and left, as was the policy at that time.

I continued to serve and finally got promoted to LCpl in 1981. I was also promoted in HMRC but did not wish to stay there due to the lack of opportunities to travel. I moved to Fife to work in HM Naval Base in Rosyth and once settled I transferred to 61 (City of Edinburgh) Signal Squadron serving for many years, achieving the rank of Cpl in 1983 and Sgt in 1985 as Trade Training Instructor. When promoted to SSgt I had the opportunity of going on a tour of duty and was accepted by 1st Battalion Royal Scots to work in their Commcen and Crypto cell from 1995-1996. On return I was promoted to WO2 and attended my Yeoman of Signals Course. Following SDSR in 1999 I moved as YofS back to 52 Signal Squadron which was then based in East Kilbride. In that same year I attended and passed my course in Chiropody hoping to start a new civvi career at that point. However, in the year 2000 an opportunity to deploy on tour to Bosnia with 97 (Britfor) Signal Squadron at Banja Luka came up and I deployed as YofS with the first formed Reserve Squadron.

In 2003 I was called up for Op Telic 1 to serve with 1 (UK) Armoured Division, 211 Signal Squadron and deployed from March to July. I had applied to Commission before deploying and just as I reached Germany to join 211, I had a call from the Adjutant to say my Commission to Captain had come through and did I still want to deploy on Ops. I said I still wished to go on Ops, and I Commissioned on 29th August 2003 after my Post Operation Tour Leave. I served as 52 Signal Squadron Traffic Officer then 2IC until 2010.



1979 Recruits course

I was promoted to Major, and was proud and overjoyed to learn that my first posting was to Command the Squadron I had served in from 1981 to 1999, which had now been renamed as 51 (Scottish) Signal Squadron supporting 51 (Scottish) Brigade in UK Ops Role. On completion of my tenure as OC I then served at 51 Brigade as Staff Officer for two terms before coming back to 52 Support and Signal Squadron on 4th Feb 2019, a full 40 years since my original sign on day.

I have not forgotten my roots in the WRAC - learning my trade as DTG, and those WRAC who taught me soldiering and career courses with amazing women instructors and role models I met along the way. I also know that whatever I have achieved in my career is not half as much as the ladies who served before me achieved in more difficult circumstances and know they are made of strong stuff. I look forward to my tenure as Area Coordinator working with the branches to support our members.

I met my husband Jeff in the Reserves and we married in 1988. We have two children, 6 grandchildren and 2 Great Grandchildren who keep us on our toes. Jeff is now retired but involved with the Royal Signals Association and the Herford's Association. I run a very busy domiciliary chiropody practice. I am also Scottish Regional Director in the Institute of Chiropodists and Podiatrists and chair of the West of Scotland Branch. I am also involved with the RSA and secretary of the Edinburgh Branch.

Helen Jephcote

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 are 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".

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

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.

THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION



Following on from 2019's major commemorative events, the Royal British Legion is now developing plans for events in 2020 marking the 75th anniversary of both VE Day in early-May and VJ Day in August. The Legion has already been allocated Libor funds for these activities and the Charity's Trustees have also set aside funds in support.

Our ambition is to create a positive experience for the relevant veterans in much the same way as the nation witnessed over the extended D Day 75 programme in June. To achieve similar levels of veteran engagement, the Legion must use every communication link available to effectively reach out to this senior demographic, many of whom are neither digitally connected nor necessarily well supported by a network of nearby friends and neighbours.

Where communication links often remain strong however, is via the Regimental and Service connections first established many years ago. For others, there will be a dependence on news brought by younger generations who may themselves have served more recently. In either case, the critical action is to ensure that the key messages reach the appropriate audience.

It is with that in mind that I respectfully ask for the kind support of your Association and its members so that the information on our VE Day and VJ Day websites reach every entitled veteran in a timely fashion and they can be reassured that they need not worry unnecessarily about either costs or logistics. Downloadable copies of all information and FAQs are available online.

Bob Gamble OBE
Assistant Director for Commemorative Events

If you would like more information and/or to apply for tickets to attend events surrounding these commemorations please go to the appropriate RBL websites, namely:

In 2020 we will be asking the nation to remember the impact that leaving, missing and returning home has on service men and women & their loved ones – then and now. The commemorations for both VE and VJ Day will be the central part of our national remembrance and will bring home the scale of service and sacrifice made by men and women of the Second World War generation.

VE-Day

<https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-involved/remembrance/remembrance-events/ve-day-75>

A special programme of events marking VE 75 will take place over the Early May Bank Holiday 2020 in Central London and has been designed to be of particular interest to all from the Second World War generation who served at home and overseas across the European theatre. Similar commemorations are expected to be reflected in communities across the nation.

We are particularly pleased to announce that we plan to host 750 Second World War generation from across the UK, each accompanied by a nominated companion, to attend the VE 75 events programme in Central London over the period 8-9 May 2020. Our invitation includes a fully funded plan for transport, meals and accommodation; Second will travel to London courtesy of the National Rail Group on Thursday 7 May 2020 and returning home on Sunday 10 May 2020.

Eligibility:

We are inviting applications from all parts of the UK and in particular, the following categories:

- Service personnel who served under the Crown, this includes Dominion and Empire (now Commonwealth) forces, as well as foreign forces under British command such as the Polish Army of the West and the French Resistance.
- Service must have been in the European theatre between 1939 and 1945, this will include the Mediterranean, North African, and Middle East theatres.
- The spouses of service personnel who served in the above theatres.
- People who were child evacuees during the war.
- Those who served on the Home Front, for example as Land Girls, Bevin Boys, Home Guard, Women's Timber Corps, and the like, either as civilians in reserved occupations or with the Armed Forces.
- Men and women who served in the emergency services.

Logistics:

Participants will travel to London via train from their local station. If you think you may find it difficult to get to your local station, the Legion will do our utmost to provide the appropriate support. When in London, the entire veteran group will be accommodated at the Hard Rock Hotel, Marble Arch, and will be transported around the various event programme sites via coach.

All hotel rooms can accommodate wheelchairs and walking aids. If you or your companion are unable to walk unaided, please let us know on the booking form and we will do our best to accommodate your needs. In support of your stay in London, the Legion will provide an on-site and highly experienced Care capability. It is vital that you let us know in advance about any medical provisions we should make in order to make your stay as comfortable as possible.

Applications:

All applications have/had to be made using RBL's online form by 7th February 2020.

VJ-Day

VJ-Day

<https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-involved/remembrance/remembrance-events/vj-day-75>

VJ-75 at The NMA

The UK's VJ Day national event will take place at the National Memorial Arboretum on Saturday 15 August. The event will form part of a three-day public programme of events from 14 - 16 August, which will include a national service of Remembrance. Travel and accommodation will be provided by the Legion for all veterans who wish to attend - subject to eligibility as defined below. We also very much welcome and encourage the attendance of veterans' descendants at any or all of the three days at the NMA.

Overseas Campaign Tours

We are pleased to announce that in partnership with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) and Royal Commonwealth Ex-Services League (RCEL), we will be funding the travel and accommodation costs for a series of tours for veterans of the Asia-Pacific campaign, as defined below, to key commemorative, and CWGC sites, across South and South East Asia. Descendants of veterans are welcome to also come on these tours but will need to fund their own travel and accommodation.

As part of this package, travel and accommodation will also be provided for a nominated companion to accompany each veteran and a comprehensive Legion care support package will be in place throughout the event programme to support veterans.

This ambitious programme of activity has been developed with the kind support of a broad range of related UK veteran associations.

Eligibility:

Those who we define as VJ Day veterans is as follows:

- Service personnel who served under the Crown. This includes Dominion and Empire (now Commonwealth) personnel resident in the UK.
- Service must have been in the Asia-Pacific theatre between 1939 and 1945, this will include the South Asia, South East Asia, the Pacific and Indian Oceans and all the nations, islands and territories there within, Persia (now Iran), and across continental Australasia.
- All those who were interned or imprisoned and treated as combatants by Axis forces across the Asia-Pacific theatre during the war

Spouses and children of veterans, while not eligible for the tours (unless attending in the capacity as a companion to a veteran), will of course be very welcome to attend the three days of planned commemorations and activities at the National Memorial Arboretum, which will run from the 14-16 August 2020. Further details of the events taking place at the National Memorial Arboretum will be released in due course.

Applying:

These tours are taking place in countries where there isn't always the same level of medical support as the UK, therefore the Legion will be ensuring that all participants are fit to travel prior to confirming a place. If you are not able to travel abroad, we can offer you the opportunity to attend three days of VJ Day commemorative events at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire. Accommodation and travel to the Arboretum for a veteran and a companion will also be funded by the Legion in already allocated LIBOR funds.

Tours:

We will be offering veterans the chance to attend tours to one of the following destinations;

- Kohima, North East India
- Burma, Myanmar
- Singapore/Thailand
- National Memorial Arboretum

When applying for a place please indicate which tour you wish to be part of.

[Editor: I cannot see a closing date for application for VJ-Day events]

We (the RBL) encourage applications from all of those who contributed to victory in Europe and VJ-Day 75 years ago, including spouses and civilians from reserved occupations across the UK and Commonwealth.

We, at the Association, echo the invitation issued by the Royal British Legion and actively encourage as many of you as possible to register to be involved in these important commemorations.

EVENTS – GENERAL

VISIT TO RAF HONINGTON

Wendy Hooton

I had the pleasure of being invited by the Station Warrant Officer Mac Macdonald to the RAF Regiment Graduation Parade at RAF Honington. I took Norman Gregory a WW2 Lancaster Bomber veteran with me. This was the largest amount of airmen to graduate for a long while - there were 45. We had a lovely day and were able to chat to a few of the graduates afterwards at a reception.

I captured Norman's medals with the SWO's in the background, the old and the new.





Norman Gregory's medals with SWO in the background (the old and the new)

WRAC Lionesses Centenary 10k Run York 2019 Wendy Hooton

Continuing from the last Lioness magazine 2019 No2. ...

As a reminder - we had 142 runners/walkers, over 50 supporters and 168 people dining at the Principal Hotel York for the post run supper. (Thank you to Mal Fulton for finding such a splendid venue). Amazing numbers and a wonderful 'pride of Lionesses' chatting, laughing, reminiscing and enjoying the "esprit de Corps" we all love.

If you haven't been part of the fun yet PLEASE JOIN US in 2020 in Cardiff, you won't be disappointed.

The Lionesses began to arrive on Friday by car and train. Some were in apartments booked through Airbnb, others hotels and some in their motorhomes/caravans at the local campsite. It was an evening drinking, dining and chatting as we all met up in various bars and restaurants.

On the Saturday afternoon we all congregated in the City Centre Premier Inn where T-shirt's were distributed by my team of helpers, Helen Davies (Meades), Budgie Rosewell, Nan Bulman and Mal Fulton. The main raffle tickets to be drawn on Sunday evening were being sold by our VP Ali Brown and Lyn Hatch, York key rings made and sold by Jackie Clarke and raffle tickets for the Centenary cake homemade by Julie White were also being sold. The area I had reserved (by the bar of course) was buzzing - we took over the whole bar. At 17:30hrs it was time for a briefing so everyone knew where to be on Sunday morning for the start of the run, another briefing and a group photograph.



The weather forecast was thunderstorms but, true to tradition, it was a hot one but not quite a scorcher. The excitement, expectation and nerves were all exposed as everyone made their way to the start of the run.

We had a 2 minute silence to remember the 2 Lionesses we have lost this year:-

Samantha Stretch - Runner

Amanda Grant - Supporter

Samantha's parents Jean and Ray Stretch entered the York 10k wearing yellow sashes in Samantha's memory. They raised over £200 for the WRAC Association. Terry Gregg worked with Samantha as volunteers on the DIY SOS Build. He also ran in her memory and fundraised too. Amanda Grant's brother Baillie Peacock made a donation of over £100 to the WRAC Association in her memory. Our grateful thanks to both families and Terry.

RIP LIONESSES - WE WILL REMEMBER.



Samantha Stretch



Amanda Grant



Jean & Ray Stretch



Terry Gregg & Wendy Hooton

Our photographers were out on the route, Heather Gaughran, Rosie Garrison and Marilyn Preece - our grateful thanks to them as always. The supporters were also along the route and at the finishing line cheering us all on. It was a fantastic boost. If you saw a photographer or supporter you felt obliged to jog!! Everyone crossed the finishing line in under 2 hours with no injuries. I was relieved and thankful!







Our first Lioness home was Rowena Naile (Vice Chairman of the WRAC Association) in 44mins 57secs. An amazing time, well done Rowena. Our eldest Lioness is Sandy Cawley aged 79 years who completed the course in a very credible 1hr 42mins 55secs - absolutely brilliant, congratulations Sandy. I look forward to you joining us again next year in Cardiff in your 80th year with Sheila Johnson. **OUR FIRST OCTOGENARIANS.**

After another group photograph wearing our medals, we all dispersed to various drinking establishments before congregating for the evening supper at the Principal Hotel. The tables were set up, candelabras lit, the raffle tickets were still being sold and after my short speech to thank everyone for their support and amazing fundraising, supper began. The chatting never stopped as the drinks flowed and then it was time to leave. The WRAC flag was lowered from the front of the Principal Hotel and everyone made their way back to their accommodation ready for the journey home the following day, although some stayed a few more days to enjoy sightseeing.





Thank you all for your continuing support, to the WRAC Association for providing the T-shirt's (Tanya for ordering and posting them), to Julia Doig (WRAC Finance Officer) who deals with all the donations and to all the Facebook groups WRAC/ATS, Women's Royal Army Corps (WRAC), WRAC/ATS (Women who have served or serve in the Army), SFKAWRAC (Soldier's Formerly Known as WRAC), and the Branch Facebook Groups who allow me to promote our Annual Fundraising Event and have also made donations. My final thanks to my daughter Hannah who ran with me this year and has given me tremendous support throughout the year, and my sister Lyn for being so supportive.

OUR FINAL FUNDRAISING TOTAL (without Gift Aid) was £30,650.25. Just amazing. Well done to all of you who fundraised and sponsored us.

We have our own Facebook Group if you would like to join us, it is called WRAC LIONESSES FUNDRAISING GROUP. It is not a chat site, just one to promote our fundraising events.

I look forward to welcoming you to our 10k event in CARDIFF on Sunday 6th September 2020.

Wendy Hooton

WRAC LIONESSES 8TH ANNUAL 10K RUN



COME AND JOIN THE FUN!!

WHAT: 10k RUN / WALK / JOG / CRAWL!

WHERE: CARDIFF

WHEN: SUNDAY 6th SEPTEMBER 2020

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO JOIN THE WRAC LIONESS',

RAISE FUNDS FOR THE WRAC ASSOCIATION,

**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
Or HQ WRAC Association 0300 400 1992**

FUNDRAISING PAGE NOW OPEN!

www.virginmoneygiving.com/team/wraclionesses1

**SERVE
SUPPORTING WOMEN WHO / SERVED**

100 MILE WALKING CHALLENGE 2020

Marg Davies

Marg Davies here informing you about my 100 Mile Walking Challenge 2020. I will be walking in Scotland this year, between 17th April and 23rd April 2020. I will be taking an extra day, seven days in total, to complete the route from the North Sea at Fort George via Inverness, Loch Ness and the Caledonian Canal to finish near the Atlantic Ocean at Fort William.

I hope to raise funds this year for Cancer Research UK and the WRAC Association. I know that there are many calls on your generosity these days but my charities and I would greatly appreciate any support you could provide.

You can donate via my Virgin Money Giving page at:
<http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/MargaretDaviesWRAC>

You can also read more about my walks and follow my walk progress on my Blog at: <http://margdaviesswalks.blogspot.co.uk>

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

SUMMER EVENT

In light of how popular your various get-togethers are – particularly for highlighting how much you, and we, all ‘support’ each other, but also in ensuring that you all have a great time together, we are considering holding an annual ‘Summer Event’. Hopefully this will move around the country somewhat and include a visit(s) to somewhere with suitable refreshments.

We are still in discussions over potential dates for this summer (hopefully end June / early July), but our hope is to offer something such as

- Guided tour(s) of Royal Hospital Chelsea
- Lunch (at the National Army Museum)
- Tours (individual or Guided) of the National Army Museum
- Attendees will have access to the Royal Hospital Pensioners ‘Club’ (aka the bar) afterwards.

Exact details will depend on numbers interested in attending. We will need to make a charge for this, which will cover the Hospital tour guide and lunch, but will keep it as low as possible.

If you are interested in attending please return the Expression of Interest form, in Centre Pages, to the Office and we will update you in due course.

FUTURE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

We are also in the discussion phase of how future AGM days may look. At present, as you will know, the AGM is an afternoon Meeting followed by Afternoon Tea – in London, unless it is a Grand Reunion (or a special year like this one, at the NMA).

Current discussions include possibly moving the AGM location each year.

Continue with afternoon Meeting but include a Guest Speaker. Afternoon Meeting followed by a Dinner (AGM and/or Dinner to include Guest Speaker).

As with Grand Reunions any accommodation you may wish to book would be your responsibility. However, this may give Members from other parts of the country a better opportunity of attending their AGM and/or of seeing other towns/cities etc. The AGM would continue to be held in March, as now.

Please keep an eye on information coming through to Branch Secretaries and/or via your Area Co-ordinator and future editions of the Lioness.

A YEAR AND A BIT IN THE LIFE OF YOUR NATIONAL STANDARD BEARER

Sharon Baker-Joyce

Well Ladies, I know that most of these events have been/will be covered elsewhere in Lioness editions but I thought this time it would be nice for me to tell you all personally what I’ve been up to. I began the year of on:

1st February - at Guildford Cathedral for the Evensong Service to start the 100yrs Celebration of the WRAC Association and 70 years of the WRAC. A very moving service, especially in our home town.

March - Off to Southampton for our Grand Reunion, again with a special visit to Guildford Cathedral to meet the Duchess of Wessex and celebrate 100yrs of the Association and 70yrs of the WRAC. A fantastic Gala Dinner with some very special guests. Ended the weekend with a Parade of Branch Standards on the Sunday. It was nice to have so many standards on parade; thank you ladies.

April - I stayed local and paraded with the Worcester and Sherwood Foresters.

May - I attended the 75yrs of Monte Cassino at the NMA with Barbara Davies and Anna Toon.

June - D-Day Remembrance at Hay-on-Wye and a D-Day Remembrance at Worcester Cathedral. Army Forces Flag Raising at Worcester Guild Hall. Then off to Salisbury for National Army Forces Day and weekend. Great to meet the Salisbury Branch ladies in the Forces Village.

July - Two visits to the NMA. One for AGC Commemoration, and one for our Act of Commemoration and Re-Dedication of the WRAC Plinth.

July - Violette Szabo (‘Carve her Name with Pride’) birthday celebration and Bastille Day at Wormalow (Herefordshire).

August - I had a weekend off (!) and went to York with over a hundred WRAC ladies and completed the 10k Run/Walk. Also, RBL Op. Banner 50 at the NMA (the longest continuous campaign in British military history).

September - 75yrs Battle of Britain Service at Hereford Cathedral.

October - Local, with the Worcester and Sherwood Foresters to Commemorate 105yrs of the Battle of Gheluvelt.

November - A very special and proud moment as I attended the Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall (thank you for the video Dot). Then a quick move to Guildford for the Remembrance Parade, as it is our home town and our special year. From the moment we arrived we were treated like royalty, consulted and included in everything.

March 2020 - This is the bit extra but very important and special to us all, our WRAC Lady Statue is being Dedicated and Unveiled. See you all there.

The sad side to my appointment ladies is that I am also asked to attend funerals of our great ladies on their way to the “Parade Ground” in the sky.

Ladies, thank you for all your support, it is an honour and a privilege to represent the Association.

REMEMBRANCE 2019

THURSDAY: FIELD OF REMEMBRANCE, WESTMINSTER ABBEY THURSDAY 7TH NOVEMBER 2019

On a bright cold morning a hardy group of members from 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. As ever, Greater London Branch were present, and we were really fortunate to have two ATS ladies with us as well. The morning started with a short service and then at the eleventh hour the Field fell silent to the sound of Big Ben.

Following the Service, the walkabout was conducted by TRHs Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex and the Duchess of Sussex. Once again, we were lucky enough to chat to the Duke and the Duchess, both of whom met and chatted with Joan who shared memories of her wartime service on the Anti-Aircraft Batteries. After many photographs and laughs with our contingent, the Duke and the Duchess of Sussex moved on to meet and greet the other veterans on parade leaving us all delighted with their attention.

The WRAC Association always receives a small allocation of tickets for this event. If you are interested in attending this event on **5th November 2020**, or indeed any of the Remembrance week events, please do get in touch with Association HQ.

Ali Brown













What an absolute delight to have the Duke and Duchess of Sussex attending the Field of Remembrance today. They were both in great spirits, and we were very grateful they both stopped to talk to the members at our Association plot. As always, I planted several crosses for our ladies who are no longer with us.

A jolly gathering was held afterwards in the nearby Sanctuary Hotel, remembering absent friends.

Wendy Hooton

SATURDAY: FESTIVAL OF REMEMBRANCE, ROYAL ALBERT HALL

As has been mentioned elsewhere in this edition, and as some of you may have noticed, Sharon Baker-Joyce paraded your National Standard at the Festival of Remembrance in the Royal Albert Hall. This was, of course, in the presence of HM The Queen and other members of the Royal Family. Sharon was invited by The Royal British Legion to parade the Standard in recognition of the Association's Centenary. It may have only been a short glimpse, but Sharon and our Standard were visible on the televised coverage.

Huge thank you to TRBL for inviting us, and Sharon for participating.

SUNDAY: REMEMBRANCE PARADES CENOTAPH, LONDON



Above is a snap of thirty girls who paraded with the RMP on Sunday at Whitehall. They range from Bimbo (Charmaine) Colman being over 80, righty down to the younger post-WRAC-demise generation and include Caroline Beazely who was shot in NI. in the 1990's.







REMEMBRANCE DAY AT GUILDFORD SUNDAY 10TH NOVEMBER 2018 Ali Brown

In recognition of the Centenary of the WRAC Association and the fact that the WRAC hold the Freedom of the Borough, the Borough Council of Guildford issued an invitation to us to attend the Remembrance Day events. This we gladly accepted and a small group of us, accompanied by Sharon Baker-Joyce and the National Standard, arrived at Holy Trinity Church in Guildford on a bright and sunny morning. We were warmly welcomed by the Rector and I was taken through my rehearsal for the Lesson I was due to read. Due to the size of the church, there was quite a delay on the microphone so the first thing I had to learn was to slow down when doing the Lesson.

Soon the church was packed with other regimental association and veterans along with some recruits from the ATC Pirbright, most of whom looked desperate for some sleep. There were many representatives from the PWRR as they also have the Freedom of the Borough.

Much to my delight, the Service was based around the history of women in the Army going back to the WAACs being formed in 1917. The history of the WRAC Association was also included by both the Rector and Colonel Patrick Crowley, who is the Honorary Colonel of the PWRR. In fact, the whole service was about us, and the icing on the cake was when the pronouns of he and his in the hymn "He Who Would Valiant be" were changed to she and her. A definite first for me and I think for the hymn.

Buoyed up from the service we then all went outside and our small but perfectly formed contingent took our place at the very front of the Parade, just behind the Band. We marched to the Castle Grounds to the sounds of the clapping crowds, where Rowena Patrick MBE and myself laid 2 wreaths, from the WRAC and the WRAC Association. This was very moving in itself, and views could be seen across the whole of the city.

It was then time to warm up, and we retired to the Guildhall for drinks and nibbles, very welcome by this point in the day. Once the speeches were done, and again we were thanked for attending, we then made our way to the pub and had a lovely lunch all together.

My thanks must go to the Rector of Holy Trinity for making us feel so welcome, to the Borough Council for giving us pride of place,

and to Audrey Smith and Rowena Patrick MBE, for making the day happen and for rounding us all up.

A great day, and for those who wish to go to our Spiritual Home for Remembrance, an alternative to the Cenotaph. I thoroughly enjoyed myself.



Rowena, Ali, Chris, Dot & Barbara



Audrey & Liz



Fire crews

GUILDFORD, SURREY

Chris Corker

On Saturday 9th November Dot Ryder and I travelled to Guildford and were met at the station by Audrey Smith and Rowena Patrick. We went to the Fire Brigade Station which had kindly put on afternoon tea for Veterans and then attended the Sunset Ceremony at 1800 with the off-going and on-coming fire crews. Once a month the Fire Station opens its doors to Veterans and provides bacon rolls and a hot drink [Editor's note: see note elsewhere in magazine]. They are also very supportive of homeless Veterans.

On Sunday we were at Holy Trinity Church for the 09.45 Borough Service of Remembrance. The Mayor, Councillor Richard Billington, and members of the Council attended as well as a contingent of young soldiers from Pirbright, Guides, Brownies, Scouts, RAFA, War Widows Association, Salvation Army and Cadets.

During the Service, which was led by Canon Robert Cotton, the WRAC were the focal point and during Col Patrick Cowley's presentation of the "Anniversaries of 1944, 1969 and 1974" we remembered Pte Caroline Slater age 18 and Pte Ann Hamilton aged 19 who were killed on 5th October 1974 during the bombing of the Horse and Groom Public House.

The hymn "Who would true valour see" was adapted so that "he" and "him" were changed to "she" and "her". The first verse read:

*Who would true valour see,
let her come hither;
one here will constant be,
come wind, come weather;
there's no discouragement
shall make her once relent
to be a pilgrim.*

The two subsequent verses were sung in the same way. It was a very moving time for all of us who were there.

Forming up after the Service with Sharon Baker-Joyce and the National Standard, the WRAC, proudly having the Freedom of the City, led the Parade past the Mayor and his party with an "eyes left" and down the cobbles of the High Street with a left turn to the Castle Grounds. There the ceremony was held for those laying wreaths after the 2 minutes silence at 11.00. There are 2 memorials in the Castle Grounds - one for the fallen of the two world wars and the newer one for those who had been killed since the end of WWII. Ali Brown and Rowena Patrick each laid a wreath at one of the memorials on behalf of the WRAC Association.

We then adjourned to the Guildhall where the Mayor and Council had laid on wine, tea, coffee and biscuits. Having met a newly elected Lib Dem Councillor Dot and I took great delight in giving her a potted history of the WRAC and its association with Guildford, of which she knew nothing.

After leaving the Guildhall we retired to the Keep for Sunday lunch.

Although we were just 8 on parade we felt like 80 in number as our pride in being in our spiritual home was a very special moment and as it is amazing how well remembered the Corps is in Guildford. I would not have been anywhere else on that day.



Sharon, Amanda, Barbara, Chris, Dot, Ali, Audrey and Rowena

WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

SATURDAY 21st MARCH 2020

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2020

The 2020 AGM will be held in the Aspects Centre, National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, Staffs. on Saturday 21st March 2020.

DRAFT AGM AGENDA

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks
2. Apologies for Absence
3. Confirmation of 2019 Minutes
4. Business Arising
5. Trustees Report
6. Financial Report
7. Report of Editor of the Association Journal
8. Reports of Committees
9. Resolutions
 - a. Trustee/Council
 - b. Branch
 - c. Re-election of Honorary Treasurer
10. Any Other Business
11. Date of Next Meeting

BUFFET LUNCH

will be served between the AGM and Unveiling (13.00 approx.)

This must have been pre-booked

(it is now FULLY BOOKED and over-subscribed. The NMA Café will be open as usual)

WRAC Lady STATUE DEDICATION & UNVEILING

The newly-commissioned Statue of a WRAC Lady, in No2 uniform with GSM, will be Dedicated, and unveiled, along with the relocated Ack Ack Memorial, into her new home at the WRAC Association plot, National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, Staffs. on Saturday 21st March 2020 at 14.30.

TIMETABLE for day

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 11:00 | AGM |
| 12:30 | Buffet lunch (for Association members only, must be pre-booked) |
| 14.30 | Unveiling and Dedication of WRAC Lady Statue & Ack Ack Memorial |
| 15.30 | Close of day (NMA and its facilities remain open until 17.00) |

AGM RAFFLE

We are once again holding an AGM Raffle, which will be drawn at the end of the meeting, on Saturday 21st March 2020.

Tickets for the Raffle are enclosed with this edition of Lioness

Selection of fabulous prizes (*) to be won.

Tickets are £1 each, or £5 per book of 5.

Tickets are only available to purchase in advance of the AGM, and will NOT BE AVAILABLE TO PURCHASE ON THE DAY.

(*) Prizes will include:

- 'Mini Mo' Statuette,
- Commemorative Covers (courtesy of BFPS) specially signed by selection of:
 - Dame Kelly Holmes DBE,
 - Heather Stanning OBE (Royal Artillery officer and member of Great Britain's Gold-medal winning rowing team),
 - Sandy Hennis (ex-Royal Signals officer and member of Antarctic record-breaking Ice-Maidens group)
 - and Dr Nics Wetherill MBE (full-time army doctor and leader of the Antarctic record-breaking Ice-Maidens group)
- Centenary Commemorative Memorabilia

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.

**PLEASE RETURN YOUR RAFFLE TICKETS AND MONEY TO HQ OFFICE
BY 16TH MARCH 2020.**

FEATURES- GENERAL

WRAC LADY STATUE Babs Anderson

I have been to visit Andy and Mini Mo regularly. Everything is looking good and I have impressed upon him that several hundred passionate WRAC Association ladies are depending upon him. No pressure then.

Andy cast another maquette so that he could work his magic on Mini Mo in one location, whilst working on Maxi Mo at the farm. I've got my eye on the new Midi Mo.

Myself and Ali met Andy at the NMA Tuesday 28 January for further update, along with one of the NMA guys to talk about logistics of getting 'Mo' in place.



Mini Mo, in progress



Midi and Mini Mo's



Midi Mo's mould

NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM PORTRAIT PAINTING Wendy Hooton

Following are some photos of my portrait painting on 21st September 2019. I have included a photo of 3 others who had their portraits painted and Betty Webb's portrait is in the background, as she couldn't attend the Behind the Scenes evening. This way you have all 5 of us in a manner of speaking!]

I had the honour of being 1 of 5 women selected to have their portrait painted at the National Army Museum in London for our Centenary year. Scott Pohlschmidt from the London Fine Arts Studios was the artist, who has also painted Andrew Marr, poets Wendy Cole and Andrew Motion and the Headmaster of Charterhouse, John Witheridge. He has also developed a body of sculpture commissions.

It was a unique experience where for 4 hours I talked about my army career whilst Scott painted. It wasn't easy for him painting a moving target as he put it! I had given Kirsty Parsons, the Curator at the NAM, a brief of my service history and she had prepared some questions.

As well as talking about the work I did running Communication Centres and Cipher Offices I spoke about the opportunities I had been given such as learning to drive in a land rover in Aldershot and learning to ski in Silberhutte in Germany, both of which I continue to enjoy. I had been fortunate to go on Exercise Long Look in 1978, an exchange with the Australian Army where I was stationed at 2 Signal Regiment, Watsonia, Melbourne. I managed to fit in visits to the Gold Coast, Sydney, Perth and hitchhike around Tasmania! In Edinburgh I had the pleasure of going behind the scenes of Edinburgh Castle, courtesy of Lt-Gen Sir Norman Arthur, Governor of the castle at that time.

It was wonderful to see how the painting was progressing in my lunch break. Scott commented how he was grateful he had green on his paint palette. As I'm an Army Veteran it had to be a green outfit for me!

I am so thankful to the WRAC Association and the National Army Museum for this amazing experience and for those who came to support me, including my family. I hope you all enjoyed it as much as me.



Rubber inner to fibreglass mould



Original maquette of Mo (Marjorie)



Wendy Hooton

Wendy Hooton joined the Women's Royal Army Corps (WRAC) in 1972, completing her Basic Training at the WRAC Centre in Guildford. She went on to complete her trade training as a Communication Centre Operator at Catterick, North Yorkshire.

Wendy was attached to the Royal Corps of Signals in 1973 and served with them in London, Germany, Hong Kong, Aldershot, Australia (taking part in Exercise Long Look), Cyprus, Catterick and Edinburgh.

Wendy left the WRAC in 1990. She is now a member of the WRAC Association for which she has taken part in many fundraising campaigns.

This portrait was painted by Scott Pohlschmidt, London Fine Art Studios, on 21 September 2019.



Kirsty Parson, NAM Curator & Wendy Hooton





4 of those painted (L-R): Cathy Munro, Rowena Naile, Pauline Milne & Wendy Hooton



Completed portraits (L-R): Rowena Naile, Cathy Munro, Pauline Milne & Betty Webb

GUILDFORD CATHEDRAL PLAQUE

We have been busy working with Guildford Cathedral on the design and production for a new plaque, commemorating the Association's Centenary, to be installed above the Books of Remembrance in Guildford Cathedral.

The idea has been agreed in principle by the Cathedral, it's Fabric Advisory Committee and the Cathedrals' Fabric Commission for the Church of England. An image is now with a cathedral-nominated designer for taking forward.

Once we have news that this piece of work has been completed and is ready for installation, unveiling and Dedication we will let you all know.

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.

WEBSITE UPDATES

We continue to review and update where appropriate, various forms, lists and information for use by Members, Branches and Areas. These include:

Membership Application Form – A slightly revised Form has been designed, a copy of which is included in this edition of *Lioness*. If you are aware of anyone wishing to join please encourage them to use this form.

Mention in WRAC Dispatches – A slightly revised Form has been designed for use by Branch Secretaries, which then need forwarding to your Area Chairman, for them to send onto Headquarters. The nominations will be taken to the next Council meeting and successful nominees will be honoured in the next edition of *Lioness*.

Events Tab, on website – hopefully this now makes more sense of who meets where, when etc. A revised form for submission of events has been sent out to Branches by Tanya – please use this form if at all possible, as it makes her task of inputting that information onto the website that much easier and quicker.

BENEVOLENT FUND GRANTS

WELFARE GRANT

The Welfare Needs Grant has been introduced primarily to assist WRAC Association members to attend either Branch or Association social events where without the grant they would be unable to do so. Grants can be awarded by the Ben Fund Secretary up to £100 per individual member per event but must not exceed £200 per year.

Applicants must be a current member of the WRAC Association and a former ATS or WRAC servicewoman, including TA, with one day's paid service or more. Applicants will need to complete a Welfare Needs Grant Request form and provide evidence of costs/use of grant.

For more information and details on how to apply please contact Julie Winks, Benevolent Fund Secretary on 0300 400 1992 or alternatively please email to: benfund@wracassociation.org.uk.

ONE-OFF AND RECURRING GRANTS

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

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR HELP?

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

ARE THERE ANY OTHER CRITERIA?

Yes, you must be in need of financial help. There's also a limit on the amount of savings that you can have above which the Benevolent Fund is unable to make an award.

ONE OFF GRANTS

The fund has helped with one-off grants in a wide range of categories.

REGULAR CHARITABLE PAYMENTS:

- **Princess Royal Memorial Fund Annual Maintenance Grants (AMG)** – a grant to help with day-to-day living expenses. Applicants will be of State Retirement Age, living on a low income and demonstrate need for such assistance.
- **Overseas Princess Royal Memorial Fund Annual Maintenance Grant (Overseas PRMF AMG)** – these have the same criteria as the AMG but for those ex service women living overseas.
- **Ben Fund Annual Maintenance Grant (AMG)** – this grant is for applicants below state pension age where there is a long term need for support. It would apply to those who are unable to find employment through no fault of their own due to being persistently in poor health or caring for family members.
- **Ben Fund Support Supplement (SS)** – a short term grant of variable duration for those applicants below State Retirement Age. It can be used to cover income shortfalls arising from delays in receiving state benefits or short term loss of salary due to medical treatment.
- **Care Enhancement Grant (CEG)** – weekly assistance for beneficiaries of state pensionable age to cover nursing/care home fees top up, care at home or a personal expense allowance for those resident in a nursing/care home.
- All Regular Charitable Payments are reviewed on an annual basis.

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 does, then your first port of call is your local branch of SSAFA or regional Royal British Legion (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.

SSAFA: 0800 731 4880

www.ssafa.org.uk/help-you/do-you-need-our-help-or-support



RBL: 0808 802 8080

www.britishlegion.org.uk/about-us/contact-us



Applications for the above grants cannot be accepted direct by the Benevolent Fund Secretary.

BENEVOLENT FUND NEWS

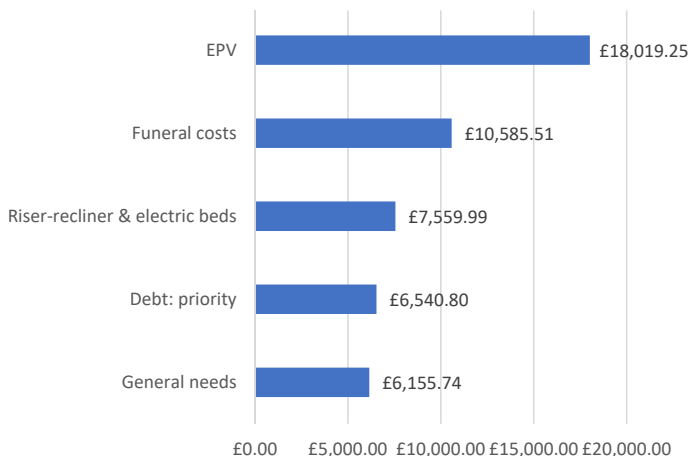
2019 has been a busy year with a higher number of applicants for assistance than in recent years. The new grant giving criteria has meant that this volume of applications has been dealt with more swiftly. The Benevolent Fund has been able to utilise the new Annual Maintenance Grants that were agreed by the Trustees in February 2019 and this enabled flexibility to be able to use funds to better suit our annuitants needs. The new Ben Fund Support Supplement has worked really well to be able to support some of our beneficiaries during income shortfalls whilst waiting to receive state benefits or short term loss of salary. Details of recurring maintenance grants and one-off awards can be found in the section entitled "Benevolent Fund Grants".

Reported below is an update of the Ben Fund over the last 6 months. If you are interested in the full financial year this information will be within the Annual Return which will be available on our website shortly.

Key Facts 2019

- 344 applications for assistance were received.
- 261 awards were granted across 26 categories.
- 23 PRMF AMG Annuitants (inc 4 former ABF annuitants), 5 PRMF AMG Overseas Annuitants and 2 Ben Fund AMG Annuitants.
- 11 beneficiaries were supported with Nursing Home Top Up Fees

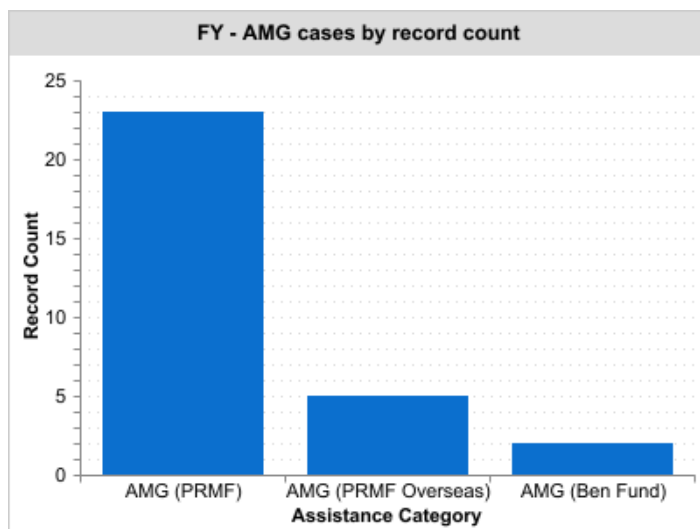
Ben Fund Expenditure: One-off Grants The top 5 one-off grant categories in the last 6 months are listed below.



Awards are also made for the following categories:

bathroom adaptations	house repairs
house adaptations	central heating/boilers
electric wheelchairs	carpets and flooring
riser-recliner chairs	clothing
stair-lifts	furniture
disability aids including electric beds	white goods
annual maintenance grants	removal expenses
care home fee top-ups	rent, deposits and
respite breaks	bonds
travel and transport	food vouchers

Recurring Grants During this year the AMG's were split into three categories and awarded as below:



Also introduced were three Care Enhancement Grants (CEG) which were split into Nursing Home Fees Top Up (NHF), Care at Home and Personal Expense Allowance. 11 NHF awards were made during this period but no grants fitted the criteria for the other categories.

A Caseworker wrote:

"I have been asked to extend ???'s gratitude and thanks for the financial support she has been offered. It has been a very difficult year and the support is very much appreciated. On behalf of SSAFA as a Caseworker I would like to say many thanks for supporting this lovely lady during this traumatic time."

£2,734.51 towards funeral costs.

"I honestly believe if I had not received this assistance, I would not now be sat in my living room on a carpeted floor with curtains feeling safe, warm and comfortable. Life has been difficult these last few years and having received this gift of comfort in my life it has gone some way to restoring my faith in human nature. I also can say that my mental wellbeing has improved being able to attain Maslow's level 1 of hierarchy of needs "shelter, warmth etc". Thank you".

£1,217.15 towards rent, white and brown goods.

"There aren't enough words to express my gratitude for the grant I've been awarded. I will be forever grateful. The last few years I've been in bad health so this has come along just when I needed it".

£1,368.04 awarded for various needs and brown and white goods.

BENEVOLENT FUND CASE STUDIES

ELAINE HANSON

Elaine Hanson is 50 years old and currently lives in Lichfield, Staffordshire. She joined the WRAC (Women's Royal Army Corps) in 1988 and after her training she went on to become a chef. Elaine served in the WRAC until it was disbanded in 1992.

While serving, she experienced an unfortunate accident, as a result of which, she was left with severe spinal damage and was medically discharged. Elaine has had no fewer than six rounds of surgery on her spine to date, but it is unlikely she will ever make a full recovery.

Elaine found herself homeless after her first two surgeries. This is when the WRAC Association stepped in to help. The WRAC Association is the only charity that supports specifically women who served in the British Army.

Having originally sought help through SSAFA, Elaine was put in touch with the WRAC Association Benevolent Fund. They paid for a deposit on a property which meant Elaine now had a home to be able to recover in. The WRAC Association Benevolent Fund also paid for soft furnishings in the home and some electrical goods.

More recently the charity has supplied Elaine with a Careline into her property. Due to her spinal injuries, she is often at risk of falls. The Careline means she is able to live comfortably knowing that if there were an accident, immediate help would come - "whether that's an ambulance or a doctor."

Elaine explains that she appreciates the WRAC Association being there "because you know that the support is there."

Having recently had her knee replaced, the Association got in touch because they'd heard about the surgery "through the grapevine." The Association took that opportunity to remind Elaine that if she should need any help, they're only a call away.

Elaine says that she is currently fundraising for the WRAC Association because she wants to "give a little back now for how much they've helped me."



"Thank you all so much for your contribution recently which was much appreciated in my time of need."

£59.99 for a new microwave, £40 pw PRMF Annual Maintenance Grant.

PATRICIA GATES

Patricia Gates is 78 years old, and now lives in Wivenhoe - a small town just outside of Colchester, Essex. She had been in the Territorial Army before joining the "regular army" in 1962, having joined so that she could travel the world, during most of her time she was stationed overseas (she spent only a year in England before being based in Germany for over two years).

When Patricia first joined up, she was commissioned only to serve three years, and they came to an end while she was stationed in Germany. Not ready to leave just yet, she rejoined the Army, spending a further year in Germany before then being stationed in Singapore.

It was while in Singapore with its humid conditions, that Patricia started to consider the end of her army career. She recalls "Eventually I got homesick for England. I was sick of the humidity and heat so came home." Patricia describes her time in the army as "five of the happiest years of my life." She considers them the best thing she's ever done, "not only for travelling, but for the camaraderie."

She spent only a year back home in England before moving out to America. During her time there, sadly Patricia had two brain tumours treated. It was when she was subsequently diagnosed with breast cancer in 1970 that she finally moved home after thirty years.

Patricia can still remember the day she got a call about the WRAC Association. It was a rainy and miserable Sunday when the phone rang, and immediately upon answering, Patricia instinctively knew it was one of her old army friends who was in Brisbane at the time. This friend explained that the WRAC Association had been trying to get in touch with her. Patricia had never married so her last name had never changed enabling the charity to find her through the phonebooks - "Excitement is an understatement," she notes.

At her first WRAC Association Grand Reunion, Patricia found a whole herd of friends from her time in Germany and Singapore who were excited to see her again. She now attends the yearly dinner club, as well as the Grand Reunions which take place every three years.

In the summer of 2018, Patricia fractured her spine for the first time, then in February 2019 was when Patricia really needed help. She fell down an escalator whilst visiting the cinema - all the way from the top to the bottom. A SSAFA Caseworker visited her frequently in hospital, but while the hospital provided her with some items to help her mobility, they could not provide everything.

That was when the WRAC Association Benevolent Fund stepped in, providing Patricia with a tool that helps her pick items up off the floor, and basket that collects mail through the letterbox. They also helped her with some items for the kitchen: A chair so that she does not have to stand while preparing food, and a kettle that only needs to be tipped (as Patricia has poor arm strength).

The biggest way in which the WRAC Association Benevolent Fund helped Patricia however was with a scooter, which Patricia describes as "a godsend." After this second fall, she had struggled with her mobility and couldn't walk long distances. Patricia doesn't drive either, so she was rarely able to go out. This was especially difficult because she had a sister with special needs in the area whom Patricia liked to visit as often as possible. The scooter provided by a grant from the WRAC Association Benevolent Fund means that she can now visit her sister, get to her Doctor appointments, and get around again with ease.

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".

SERVE
SUPPORTING WOMEN WHO / SERVED

CLEVELAND Hazel Adamson

Christmas just around the corner again, doesn't seem 2 minutes since the last one. Since the last issue the branch have had the Summer Outing at Ormesby Hall. Lunch was enjoyed by all who attended, unfortunately some ladies missed the photo call.

In September our Standard Bearer, Ann Mahoney, was at Eden Camp at Malton, North Yorkshire with the branch standard to attend the All Services Parade. This is an annual event which takes place about the 8th of the month. She also attended a dedication at Thornaby for the Poppy of Honour that was visiting a lot of places around the country.



L-R: Jenny Severn, Hazel Adamson & Wendy Hall



L-R: Maxine Lane & Janet Watkins

October saw five members attend Dinner Club Weekend in Nottingham. The weather wasn't very kind to us, but we all enjoyed the weekend, meeting new friends and catching up with old ones.

November saw a few branch members selling poppies in different locations around the area -Suzanne Allan in Cleveland Centre Middlesbrough, and Judith Gallagher and Ann Mahoney in Tesco Billingham.



Suzanne at start of Poppy Appeal

The Branch are hoping to attend the AGM at the Arboretum in March and we are looking into the cost of a minibus. Our next outing will be our Christmas Lunch at the Highfield, which we are all looking forward to.

GRIMSBY **Carole Tyler**



This year we lost two of our members. Carole Tyler (Chairman) attended one funeral with the Branch Standard and a few branch members. The other funeral was many miles away and we didn't manage to say our good-byes, but she was in our thoughts.

In July all 18 members attended a fish and chip meal at our favourite 'chippy', and in September all 18 members again attended a carvery meal. We always enjoy our meals out (with no washing up).

On November 11th, a few members went to the Gallery Restaurant in The Grimsby College for a 3-course meal, provided by students to say THANK YOU to veterans. The invite went to ex- RAF, Army and Navy personnel and the meal was excellent. A few questions regarding the length of service, and what they did whilst in the armed forces were asked. It was lovely to meet the students after the meal.

On November 27th we had our Christmas Lunch at the Cleethorpes Golf Club and we had 24 members and guests sitting down at one long table. Our favourite guest, and friend, Ali Brown, gave us an insight into various things happening and it was fantastic having her to visit once again. It is always the highlight of the meal when Ali turns up and mingles with us all. We all invited her to our Christmas Lunch in November 2020, and hopefully she will once again join us at the Cleethorpes Golf Club.

Our next branch meeting is on December 13th, and we have two birthdays to celebrate on that day. Carole Tyler will be 80 years and Chris Guest will be 75 years old. We always celebrate ages ending with 0's and 5's, and our treasurer Alyson Wilson and her Mother make a beautiful birthday cake to go with a glass of wine at the branch meeting nearest to the birthdates.

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL

OLDHAM **Kath Kirtley**



A couple of photos to show that the Oldham girls are still active.

Elaine Brookes and Kath Kirtley manning a poppy stall in the local co-op.

And some of us on our Wednesday night out. Unfortunately a couple of girls were absent that evening but Lynda Stringer is very active with our local Breakfast club.

We are all looking forward to next year when hopefully we will be busy again.

Hope you all had a good Christmas and a happy new year.

SCOTLAND & N IRELAND

ABERDEEN Mhairi Irving

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all.

The Aberdeen branch is still ticking over; just. Our membership currently stands at 10 members, of which we have 2 life members.

Unfortunately, the branch has been pretty quiet, but we still meet up regularly in a local hostelry - Ma Camerons, Aberdeen, only for tea and biscuits, honest.

By the time you read this, our 2019 Christmas Lunch on 2nd December 2019 will be a distant memory.

We wish Joan Bartlett a speedy recovery after her knee operation last November.

I have decided to stand down as the branch secretary. It's been in the pipeline for some time, but unfortunately, I do not have a successor, so the branch will become more of a social branch. Hopefully they will still meet up regularly.

I would suggest that in future all correspondence should go through the Headquarters branch.

[Editor's note – Many thanks Mhairi for all your efforts, much appreciated. If someone in the branch does take on the co-ordinating of the social get-togethers please let HQ office know so we can put any potential enquirers in touch with someone in the Aberdeen area].

FIFE & TAYSIDE Margaret Selfridge

Sorry to everyone but I missed the deadline for last issue so this will be a bit of a catch up.

Sadly one of our ATS ladies passed away on 21 January 2019 at the age of 95. Martha Watson enlisted in 1942 and served with 559 Ack Ack Battery HMS Ganges. We did not learn of her death until her son informed us in June. Her funeral was very well attended with Standard Bearers from HMS Ganges, the Royal Artillery, Kingdom of Fife and the British Legion. Martha's story is featured in the book of 100 Wonderful Women.

The ceremony of raising the flag for Armed Forces Day was held at Balhousie Castle on 24 June and was attended by Jo Young and Isobel Gordon.

In July Lady Martha Bruce, with Jo Young as companion and seven ladies from the various Scottish branches, attended the Royal Garden Party at Holyrood in Edinburgh. It was a lovely day and they were all presented to The Queen. Our branch was represented by Isobel Gordon. Isobel had waited a long time for this opportunity as shortly after receiving her commission she was invited by Lady Martha to attend the Garden Party as her companion. She regretfully declined as she had just started a new job and didn't want to ask for time off.

On Remembrance Sunday in St Johns Kirk in Perth, Helen Jephcote laid the wreath and planted poppy crosses on behalf of ATS/WRAC.

We had a good turnout for our Christmas lunch. As usual this was held at the Salutation Hotel in Perth. We always have a lovely private room for our meal and raffle.



Christmas party

We don't often get the pleasure of seeing Sandra Johnson at our monthly lunches as she works full time, but she managed to attend the Christmas lunch. She and her three daughters are very involved with the Regimental Band, Black Watch ACF. Last month the band visited Nanchang in China to take part in their tattoo, the first youth band to be invited. Judging by the photographs on their Facebook page they had an amazing experience.



Sandra Johnson and daughters

Branch membership continues to be steady at just over 40, with five new members within the last year. We continue to meet at the Salutation Hotel in Perth for lunch on the last Thursday of each month.

ULSTER

Sylvia Connachan

Hello Everyone. We held our AGM, 14th September 2019 at the Pizzeria Restaurant, Lisburn, at 12oclock for lunch, which is always a good start to the day. Then we went to Lisburn Legion, at 2 o'clock for our AGM. Our Officers are, Chair:- Sylvia Connachan, Secretary:- Sylvia Connachan, Treasurer:- Sarah Cairns. On the 28th September 2019, The Not Forgotten Association invited Sarah Cairns & myself to a Luncheon at the Corick House Hotel, Clogher. It was a lovely afternoon,

On the 25th October 2019, 6 of us met up in Belfast for a lunch at the Monaco. Chrissie was home from England for a couple weeks holiday; we had a lovely afternoon.



On the 4th of November 2019, I laid a cross at the Field of Remembrance, City Hall, Belfast.



On the 10th November 2019, our WRAC Wreath was laid at the Cenotaph, City Hall, Belfast, by Joan McCabe. Joan said it was a lovely day. Sorry no Photo.

We are having our Christmas Dinner on the 14th December 2019, at the New Forge Country Club. Christmas won't be long until it is upon us, so would like to say "Hope you all have a great Christmas and Happy New Year", from all of our ladies here in the Ulster Branch.

In February we are hoping to go on a tour of Hillsbough Castle, it has all been renovated, and the gardens all landscaped. We will be attending a few memorial events in the coming year. Looking forward to attending the Arboretum in March. Wishing you all a Wonderful Christmas & New Year.

SOUTH & SOUTH WEST

BRISTOL

Judith Stinchcombe

We are nearing the end of what feels like a very busy year, the branch meetings continue to be the usual mix of information and banter.

Following the summer holidays we welcomed Emlyn, a SSAFA caseworker who works with Age UK in a Joining Forces programme in Gloucestershire. He spent an hour telling us what SSAFA could do for us from hips, knees, the NHS, the Breakfast clubs, to how to apply for our veterans' badge. Emlyn served in the RAF, but we didn't hold that against him.



SSAFA's Emlyn visiting branch

Our monthly lunch took us to Blaise Castle House and Museum in October, a surprising discovery in the middle of a busy city. Members of the public have donated items to the Victorian collection which is fascinating; the 19th century mansion is set in 400 acres - which we didn't walk, although we did visit the folly, which once featured in Jane Austen's Northanger Abbey, a very peaceful spot, followed by a well-earned noisy lunch.

We stayed overnight for our visit to Bletchley Park, a meal at a local pub then a full day learning about the codebreakers. We started with the official tour, then borrowed headsets which told us the story of each room we visited. There were interactive rooms, people's stories, challenges and then we found out why it all mattered. It was inspirational, somewhere you wished you had visited earlier in life.



Bletchley Park visit

Oakham Treasures for lunch in November took us back in time. This is one of the largest private collections of retail and farming history in the UK, all the things you grew up with, and an impressive collection of Royal Mail Pillar boxes that greets you at the door. We all related to the antiques, which is scary.



Oakham Treasures

The branch was represented at several Remembrance services - Weston Super Mare, Clevedon, Axbridge and London. The annual Patchway Remembrance parade, always held a week later, was the usual buzz of uniformed youngsters and veterans from all services, the whole village turned out. We stayed on for a scrummy Sunday roast served with a large dollop of banter.



Bristol at London Remembrance



Poppy Factory visit

Some of us joined a local WI group for a visit to the Poppy Factory in November. We were greeted with a very welcome cuppa, talked through the history by a very competent volunteer, then shown round the factory and introduced to some of the veterans who all had a story to tell. We were able to make our own poppy and learn how the wreaths were put together. We now have an insight into how the protocol works for Remembrance. After visiting the souvenir shop we did some window shopping in Richmond.

A trip to The Royal Hospital Chelsea was truly outstanding. Pensioner Michael Allen and Scouse Godwin (both ex RMP) treated us to the tour following lunch in the coffee shop - an amazing place to live, rich in history and tradition. The pensioners are well fed, have the best medical care available, a wide variety of activities and great company. I was told one of the main criteria to be a pensioner is to be 'unencumbered by spouse'.



In-Pensioner Michael Allen with Bristol

As always, Bristol Branch operates an open house and welcomes visitors to all its activities. If you would like more information Email: www.wracbristolbranch@mail.com or see the Branch Meetings section.

ISLE OF WIGHT Tracy Biddlecombe

The IW branch continues to meet every other month and in September five of us met up at Osbourne House Terrace Cafe, East Cowes IW and enjoyed coffee, chat and Victoria (& Albert) Sandwich Cake - what else of course! One of our members was away and one other is currently poorly, and we send our best wishes to you and get well soon.

In November 2019, two of us attended the Field of Remembrance Service at Carisbrooke Castle, and planted crosses in the grounds and also met with some young female army cadets over coffee who were representing Ryde Army Cadet Troop and Cowes Combined Cadet Force on the Island.



Ryde Army troop and Cowes CCF Cadet with WRAC ladies Val Singleton & Tracy Biddlecombe

Whilst we were at the Castle we visited our WRAC Standard in situ, at the Church of St Nicholas in Castro (in Carisbrooke Castle grounds) where it proudly stands by the altar. FYI - If you are an English Heritage member and visiting the IW you can visit Carisbrooke Castle for free.



Rev Marcs Bagg, Vicar Church of St Nicholas, Castro with WRAC Standard

On 9th Nov, members from IW Branch WRAC ATS met up for a joint meeting with the Portsmouth Branch WRAC ATS members for a luncheon at Appley Manor, Ryde IW to celebrate one of its joint members - Rose Ide, (former ATS) 100th Birthday! this was a lovely occasion, and a birthday cake, flowers and a copy of the new WRAC/ATS book '100 Wonderful Women' was presented to Rose. Rose was born on 1/11/1919 and joined the ATS in Jan 1942, serving until Jan 1946. She trained at Northampton Bks, Kingston upon Thames, served at Burseldon, Bridlington, Naples (Italy) as a Teleprinter Operative with the Royal Corps Signals. Well done Rose and thank you for your ATS service from all of us, and have a great 100th year ahead and many more to come!



Joint get-together with Portsmouth branch



Rose Ide's 100th birthday party

The next meeting of the IW branch WRAC/ATS will be in the New Year, Jan 2020. Please contact Tracy Biddlecombe for further details, 07980673402 mobile.

PLYMOUTH

Jean Cundy-Borge & Evon Roberts



Our group of coffee lovers still meet most months in Dingles Restaurant so we can arrange trips out at weekends. We have had some great trips out together this year.

In October four of us arranged to attend the WRAC dinner weekend in the Crown Plaza Hotel, Nottingham. Transport all arranged, our driver picked us all up and we set off in anticipation of a happy weekend. We got almost to Gloucester and we stopped for a break when things started to go wrong. Pat got up to help me by carrying my tray to the table, as she turned from me to walk away, she fell and I stumbled down beside her. As a result, Pat ended up in Gloucester Hospital with 2 damaged ankles, so we had to leave the poor girl in Hospital. Our driver took the rest of us to the Hotel where we tried to join in the festivities. After a busy few days we were picked up and our driver took us to the hospital to see Pat and hear her news before we were taken home. Thankfully Pat is now back home but still not walking.

The November Remembrance Service in Plymouth was well attended and enjoyed by all

One of our more successful visits was for our Christmas lunch on Saturday 23rd in the Tamar View Restaurant at Carkeel. There were 20 of us enjoying a lovely Christmas together - a beautifully cooked meal in happy surroundings. In fact, we all enjoyed it so much we have asked Evon to book the room again for next Christmas.

Several of our members will be attending the Christmas lunch arranged by The Not Forgotten (TNF) for Veterans at the Crowne Plaza Hotel Plymouth, on Monday 2nd December. This will be followed by the RAFA club lunch on the 14th December

We met in Dingles today for our last meeting this year and we thanked Evon for all her work and for arranging our Christmas lunch and reminded her to book next year's Christmas dinner on November 28th.

Our next meeting will be on February 25th 2020 – Coffee/lunch in the Dingles Restaurant in the House of Fraser, Royal Parade, Plymouth.

We wish you all a Happy Christmas and a healthy New Year.

PORTSMOUTH

Val Duke

After the AGM held in August the Portsmouth Branch continued to enjoy a celebratory year.

In September we met for our usual coffee morning at the Maritime Club and the following month, October, we embarked on a visit to Pagham to meet up with one of our senior and valued members, Kay. A hearty luncheon was subsequently devoured!

In November we travelled to the Isle of Wight, meeting up with members of the Isle of Wight branch to celebrate with Rose for her 100th birthday. With the aid of modern technology via a mobile phone we had visual communication with Di, who was unable to attend to the event, and gave her a wave. The following day a number of our members attended and paraded at the Remembrance Service; the standard was paraded and wreath laid. But we couldn't end there, not without our ladies making their way, once again, to the Lady Hamilton to re-fuel with food and drink.



As we approach our Christmas celebrations, we wish one and all a prosperous new year.

SWINDON **Sharon Bingham**

Swindon WRAC Branch has finally been able to secure a place for its meetings over the past few months and we have seen new members come and join us. We are very grateful for the RAFA Club being able to offer us a space and look forward to the future as the club changes.

Many of our ladies attended a visit to Arkell's Brewery which was arranged by myself and James Arkell the owner. We had a lovely evening on the history of the brewery which includes 2 steam engines to help with the process from the Swindon Steam Railway which is a national heritage site. A lot of beer was on tap with a lovely buffet laid on by the Kingsdown Pub.



L-R: Lydia Lyne, Tina Baker, Karen Rosier, Sharon Bingham, Chris Rosier, Brenda Goodfellow and Joy Mutlow.

We were invited by KBR and Ssafa to attend a "Veteran's Afternoon Tea" which was attended by Wendy Paull, Brenda Goodfellow, Lydia Lyne and myself. It was a lovely afternoon with Letherbridge Primary School children singing and meeting many other veterans and the KBR staff.



Including Wendy Paull & Brenda Goodfellow



Including Lydia Lynes & Sharon Bingham

As always, we had our "Christmas Meal" but due to being let down by the original venue the Kingsdown Pub came up trumps and was enjoyed by all. We had our secret Santa, which went down a treat with more gifts given by our members.



L-R: Joy Mutlow, Brenda Goodfellow, Rose Kilpatrick, Betsy-Jayne Lawton, Michelle Sutherland, Karen Rosier, Sharon Bingham, Lydia Lyne, Tina Baker and Chris Rosier

Our future plans are another visit to the Museum of Army Chaplaincy before its move to the Defence Academy in Shrivenham; attending the celebrations at the NMA in March; and Swindon Branch Wrens have asked us to help them celebrate their centenary in April 2020 with a canal boat cruise with afternoon tea.

So, if you are living in and around the Swindon area we would be happy for you to join us at the RAFA Club on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 19:30pm. Feel free to come along.

WINCHESTER Herme Emary

A small but select group met up at the Jolly Farmer on the 5th Sept for lunch and the AGM. With such a small number attending no real decisions could be made about next year. One decision that was made was that instead of a posh lunch in January we would head off to the Science Museum for lunch and to see the GCHQ exhibition, as well as having a look round the other exhibits. The Jolly Farmer has certainly upped its game since I last went and I think everyone enjoyed their meal

Sandy and I went to the launch of the Wonderful Women book at the NAM on 4th October. We decided to go to the museum early so that Sandy could have a look at the Rise of the Lionesses exhibition (I had already visited). That done we made our way to the Cafe (sadly closed for the night) where we met up with other Assn members waiting for the evening to start. Having made our way down to the Foyle room Sandy managed to sneak in and buy her copy of the book. Whilst we were waiting all the current resident female Chelsea Pensioners arrived (well they do live next door to the museum).



Sandy at NAM



Herme at NAM

The talk was given first by the curator of the exhibition Kirsty and then by Ali Brown. Both informative and at times funny. Then it was next door to see some bits from the collection not on show – unfortunately the queue to look at an album of press cuttings was rather long so after the first table I gave up and went outside. We did see Rowena to whom we had a quick chat. Then it was upstairs to have a look at the pictures that had been painted and lots of photos. Then back to the UJC.

We decided to come back Saturday morning rather than do something in London. It took us 2 hours in a traffic jam to get from Woking to Basingstoke, at least the replacement coach was comfortable. Engineering works – say no more.

On Thursday 14th November 8 of us met at the Porterhouse for lunch. We welcomed, for the first time, Daphne who lives locally and has been an Association member for a while but never a member of a branch. We hope she joins us. Luckily, she knew Sandy, both had taken part in the York 10K - in fact Daphne's husband Pete (ex RAPC) had also run the York 10K. We also welcomed back Denise, who has not been able to join us for ages so everyone was pleased to see her. An enjoyable meal (as usual), and a special menu so soup, steak, chips and a drink only cost £9.95, not bad.

As we were all starting to go some of us caught a glimpse of Santa's sleigh dashing down North Walls being driven by one of Santa's elves. No, not too much Christmas Cheer, it was Christmas Lights switch on day.



Kim, Emma, Patsy and Lesley



Ish, Denise, Kim, Margaret, Ray, Daphne, Sandy and Herme

LONDON & SOUTH EAST

Nina Smith

It has continued to be a busy second half of the year.

The ladies have worked hard to raise the profile of the Association with their location and as such we have seen an increase in membership across the branches with the London & SE Area, which is great for both the branch and the Association.

During August and September of last year we saw a number of ladies being painted as part of the centenary celebrations at the National Army Museum. In October all the pictures were on display. Pauline Milnes, from the London & SE Area, was one of those painted.

Also, at this Behind the Scenes Open evening, we saw the launch of the Association's book 100 Wonderful Women, which can still be purchased from the Association website – this is a really good read and well worth buying a copy.



Cathy Munro & Pauline Milnes with their portraits

In November, we saw the ladies within Royal Hospital Chelsea celebrate 10 years of residing there. We currently have 14 ladies within residence and that number is soon to grow with Helen Morse joining.

Staff Sergeant Charmaine 'Bimbo' Coleman visited Army Training Centre (ATC) Pirbright, near Guildford. Along with other Chelsea Pensioners, SSgt Coleman was given a tour of ATC Pirbright when she noticed some bayonet training ... and nothing was going to stop her giving it a go herself.



Charmaine (Bimbo) Coleman on bayonet training

November was a busy month, in that we had the Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey, where both the Duke & Duchess of Sussex took the salute and went around and talked to all the groups in attendance; the Festival of Remembrance at the Albert Hall; and The Remembrance Parade on Whitehall.

I would like to thank all the ladies for their continued support.



Duke & Duchess of Sussex take the Salute outside Westminster Abbey at the Field of Remembrance 08 Nov 2019



Festival of Remembrance at the Albert Hall on 09 Nov 19 with the Royal Family in attendance



All the wreaths that were laid at the cenotaph 10 Nov 2019

Funding from Local Council/Authority

Whilst the Worthing Branch were 'networking' at the British Legion in Shoreham in the summer this year, they were lucky enough to meet a West Sussex County Councillor, with the intriguing title of Campaigner for Good Causes, and Forces Champion. She told us that there were Council funds available for just such causes as ours, for specific events/purchases, up to £750. You will need to complete the relevant forms to apply for this fund and submit receipts.

Worthing completed the forms and sent these off with copies of receipts for their request (Christmas Lunch). In October, they were invited to attend a Council meeting where the decisions were taken, and were delighted to receive the full amount that they asked for.

I am sure West Sussex Council is not the only one in the country to run these funds. Hopefully, you may benefit.

GREATER LONDON Chrissie Mills

Our afternoon tea in July was well attended and held in a restaurant in Duke of York Square, near to the Royal Hospital Chelsea, and once again our number included a few friends plus a couple of In Pensioners, who had left before the cameras came out!



Afternoon tea

10K Run in York - We had a number of ladies from the Area join the 10K Run back in August, either as a participant or a supporter. This year one from the Greater London Branch, Patricia "Budgie" Rosewell, ran this in the time of 1.22 (now she was a PTI back in the day!!).

The branch have made a start in looking after ATS graves and three of our ladies tended to the one of Hazel Grindley in Brompton cemetery in August. They say it is a very worthwhile task and hopefully it will be the first of several that we'll take care of in future.





Jenny Harrison, Gerry Mallet, Pauline Milnes

As usual we had some ladies taking part in the parade at the Cenotaph on Remembrance Day and a few of us attended the service in Westminster Abbey. We also had a good turnout at the Field of Remembrance.



Westminster Abbey

Our meetings are due to begin again in March at the Royal Hospital Chelsea and we look forward to catching up with the In Pensioners once more.

We also look forward to seeing some of you at the National Memorial Arboretum next March for the AGM and the unveiling of the WRAC statue.

INVICTA BRANCH, KENT

Karen Radford

Well our Branch supported the WRAC York run this year with three runners participating. I lumbered round and managed to finish but well-earned praise goes out to Amanda Joynton who managed to complete the run in a very respectable time and boy how proud our Branch ladies are of her. A real achievement, well done Amanda. Also running was Gina Spacy and her son Jordan. A very big well done to you both too. A big thank you also needs to go to our supporters who travelled the distance to make sure we all made it! Tricia Wright, Kay Styles and Annie Christian.



Runners Radders, Amanda Joynton supporter Tricia Wright.

Dinner Club this year saw a table full of Invicta lovelies. Yet again this was a fabulous event and all of the ladies had a wonderful time. The venue was exceptional, and the evening's entertainment was full of laughs, fun and of course lots of dancing! If you haven't been yet then I suggest you keep a look out for next years.



Front left to right – Jacky Elliman, Mandy Cox, June Christie, Back left to right - Kay Styles, Carol Foley, Tricia Wright, Karen Radford, Eve Carroll, Margaret Ahmed Mohamed.

The monthly Branch meals, usually held on the last Saturday of every month, are still regularly attended by many. There have been a few new attendees this year increasing the numbers again. The ladies have tried to move around the county to accommodate members in less accessible areas. A visit to Deal allowed new member, Belinda Williams to join the party.



Deal venue, left to right Belinda Williams, Amanda Joynson, Joyce Head, Mary Ann Forster, Carole Foley, Kay Styles, Jacky Elliman



Wildwood, Maidstone. Tricia Wright, Liz King, Carole Foley, Mary Ann Forster, Janet Brook, Margaret Ahmed Mohamed, Kay Styles, Barbara Gallafent, Joyce Head, Amanda Joynson, Jacky Elliman and Anne Lloyd.

On the 26th October our AGM was held at the RBLI Lifeworks Centre at Capel Morris, RBLI Village in Aylesford. It was a lovely venue however it was organised on the day of the Rugby World Cup Final. To say I was unpopular is an understatement, oops. After a lovely buffet lunch Gina was able to show us around the Village and the memorial gardens.



L to R - Margaret Ahmed Mohamed, Carole Foley, London and SE Chair, -Nina Smith, Joyce Head, Liz King, Janet Brook, Eve Carroll, Karen Radford, Gina Spacy, Kay Styles.

Remembrance Parade was attended by Invicta marchers and non-marchers at the Cenotaph this year. Julie White was asked to take a picture of those who marched whilst stood on Horse Guards Parade. We knew she had taken a selfie however when it came to taking the team picture she wasn't so successful! (as you can see)



Who are these headless women? Well our marchers were, Carole Foley, Amanda Tillotson, Karen Radford, Kate Smith, Eve Carroll, Margaret Ahmed Mohamed, Mandy Cox, Kym Regan, Liz King, Gina Spacy.

Finally on Remembrance Day, Kay Styles attended Ulcombe Church graveyard to lay a wreath on the grave of one of our ATS ladies Private Katherine Mary Gibson. Out of respect and honour she laid a wreath thanking her for her sacrifice after she left this world on D-Day for the great parade ground in the sky at the age of 25. Thank you, Kay, for doing this on our behalf.



Invicta Branch is always open to new members especially those who feel they would benefit from meeting up with new like-minded friends. We are on Facebook, search WRAC Invicta Branch or feel free to contact myself via the Association.

WORTHING

Carolyn Hill

Thinking back to March, two of our members made it to the Grand Reunion at Southampton, and spent the weekend laughing and catching up with old buddies. A great time had by all.

In June, we had our regular spot on Steyne Gardens, Worthing, for the Armed Forces weekend. Our tombola stall is always a hit with the customers, and our prizes are well received. This year was Janet Goldsbrough-Jones' last as organiser of the whole event, which I believe she has been doing for at least 12 years or more. The Guards are in charge next year. Well done Janet, you deserve a rest.

Also, in June, some of us went on a coach trip to Abbotsbury Swannery, combining with another local group. A wonderful sanctuary for swans in Dorset, which was lovely, and well worth a visit. If you can arrange for dry weather, so much the better!

D-Day, in Shoreham-by-Sea, was commemorated at their memorial by the Shoreham British Legion. We joined forces with them and were invited to a cream tea the following week at the Legion. Links formed there were/are beneficial to our group, and several of us have become members.

Sad news in July. We lost our lovely 93-year-old ex-WAAF Sheila Clements, who fitted into our group like a well-loved glove. A pillar of the local community, she is missed by the whole town, and this was reflected in the bus load arriving for her funeral service. On a happier note, we have 3 ex-WRNS, who have been coming to the meetings for a year now and are an extremely welcome addition to our group.



Sheila Clements

Having seen the wonderful portrait paintings at the National Army Museum, in September some of us travelled there to visit for the day. An interesting visit. In the canteen, we bumped into a whole unit of 19th century Dragoons, on a visit from Canada, who were giving a performance at the Royal Hospital Chelsea, just next door.



Carolyn Hill, Janet McKechnie, Greta Carlisle, with the Blonde Bombshell in the background

In October, we took a coach trip to Bath; an interesting and historical city. A long journey for us, but well worth it. Also, a couple of the ladies went to the Dinner Club in Nottingham and caught up with old colleagues and friends and had a wonderful time.

In November we had Remembrance Day services/parades at Worthing and Shoreham, where our members participated, and laid wreaths.



Greta Carlisle, after laying the wreath at Shoreham



***Diana Heward, Janet Goldsbrough-Jones,
Greta Carlisle***



Eileen Barnett, Heather Digweed



Janet McKechnie

Throughout the year, we celebrate member's birthdays, with everyone's favourite occupation - eating out! There is also, always a birthday cake, with candles, of some description. Our youngest member is late 50's, and our oldest mid 90's.

WALES & WEST

Babs Anderson

On Saturday 21 September a gang of us met up for our Area Reunion. It is always lovely to see so many women gathering to chat and laugh away the day. Marches and Mid Wales Branch played host and put on a superb event. They had covered all the bases and had even laid on entertainment in the form of our very own Betty Webb. You could have heard a pin drop as everyone listened in awe to her reminiscences of her time at Bletchley Park and the Pentagon.

Wales and the West Area are going from strength to strength with several new groups setting up; Dudley and Cotswolds Rural to name but two. Keep meeting up ladies. This is how we can support each other.



BIRMINGHAM

Babs Anderson

Where does the time go?!?!? It seems like only 5 minutes since we last chatted.

Brum Branch's Bionic Platoon has had its hands full getting everyone back on Fit and Healthy Strasse. Around Christmas time last year 4 members were diagnosed with breast cancer. I am happy to tell you that all is well, and everyone is on the mend. Note to you all, please continue to check even if your last mammogram was clear. Being complacent is costly.

As the last Lioness magazine was going to print many members of the Branch were preparing to throw themselves around the streets of York. Our group was part of the 142 successful WRAC Association contingent runners/walkers/crawlers getting themselves over the finish line. It was hard to keep the satisfied smirk off our faces, so we didn't bother, knowing that we had already achieved our target. Having a couple of younger family members joining us to run and quite a few supporters made for a happy Branch atmosphere.



***Brum Branch runners and supporters
... and a cheeky flag waver, Debbie Kay Smith***



Our Branch cubs, James, Danii and Jack

Several members attended the Wales and the West Area Reunion in September where we had a fabulous time and listened to the guest speaker, Betty Webb. It doesn't matter how many times she talks to us, it's always different and always enthralling. There is a lovely photo of us all elsewhere in this journal.



***Betty Webb and Marcelle Stevenson, our big sisters,
enjoying each other's company***

17 Brum girls marched past the Cenotaph in London on Remembrance Day. It's an emotional and proud day for marchers and spectators alike. If you've never done it, please give it some thought for next time.

Due to our ongoing problems finding a suitable regular venue for our monthly meetings we decided to use a hotel just outside the City Centre for our Christmas Jumper Bash. Sadly, we weren't able to invite other Branches due to the uncertain situation and us not knowing if the venue would be up to the job. Somehow, we managed to pick up 3 gatecrashers in the guise of London Branch - Pat Rosewell, Pauline Milnes and Andie Smith who thoroughly enjoyed themselves. We found the venue to be excellent and have already booked it for our Birthday Lunch in May, to which other Branches will be invited.



Brum Branch Christmas revellers

We continue to hold our quarterly Pizza Nights and are always happy when we have Tamworth Branch join us. Pizza Night is on the second Wednesday of March, June, September and December if anyone is in the area and would like to join us for food and a laugh. Sometimes there are only 3 and other times 13. It's still good fun.

Talking of fun, we have started to go tenpin bowling on a fairly regular basis. We have two games and then lunch of sandwiches and chips with a drink. It is a lovely social occasion which we all enjoy. Join us if you fancy it sometime.



Our Branch cubs, James, Danii and Jack

Although we thoroughly enjoy our current meeting venue, the Bull Ring Tavern, it can be a little difficult to hold discussions and deal with our famous lists in the Orderly Room, so we are seriously looking at moving, yet again. The extension to our tramway has now been completed and gives us a few more options, as it runs past New Street Station and out towards Centenary Square.

Watch this space for further news on that front.

By the time you read this, we will be heading towards the unveiling of our WRAC statue at the National Memorial Arboretum. We are excited at Birmingham Branch as we have always considered the NMA a home game for us. See you there if you can make it, whatever the weather throws at us.

Forward in comradeship

CARDIFF **Debbie Amphlett**

Well time is really flying, and these reports come around thick and fast. Since the last issue we finished off the year with a curry night in September at our usual meeting place. The night was very well attended, and a good time was had by all, but unfortunately guess who forgot to take photos!

We did not have meetings in November, December or January due to there being lots of other events, and also the dark, cold, wet nights, when I tend to fall in to hibernation.

In November members of Cardiff branch attended the Remembrance parades and services both in London and across South Wales, and I know that many helped out making and selling poppies.

By the time this issue appears we will have probably kicked off the New Year of meetings with our usual New Year's meal in February. Hopefully you should have all had, either by email or via the Facebook group, the meeting dates for 2020.

2020 sees the WRAC Lionesses from all parts of the United Kingdom and beyond merge on Cardiff, to take part fundraising in the Cardiff 10K, which will take place on Sunday 6th September. I am sure all participants and supporters will have a great time and enjoy our wonderful (I know I am biased) City. Hopefully all Cardiff branch members not participating will be able to be in Cardiff to cheer everyone else on.

Thank you to everyone who has attended the meetings and events in 2019 and let's make it a great 2020.

The Cardiff branch informal meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month at the Fox and Hounds, Old Church Road, Whitchurch, Cardiff, CF14 1AD 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.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE **Frances Fairclough**

Hello from a sunny Gloucestershire, but don't blink or it may be raining again. It seems like the whole country has had it and we will soon develop webbed feet!! But in true Lioness fashion we have got on and enjoyed it no matter what the weather.

A lovely day out was had by 6 of our ladies at Highgrove for a tour of the gardens. The day started with bacon rolls and coffee, followed by a brilliantly informative guided tour of the gardens, then back to The Horse Guards Inn, Brokenborough, for a lovely buffet lunch. Thanks to The Not forgotten association.



We had the pleasure of attending a talk by Sheila Lloyd-Graham, about her life in the WRAC as a PTI. Sheila has had such an interesting and varied life in and out of the Army, and some of those attending contributed with stories of their life in the Forces. This was organised by SAAFA; thank you Judith Stinchcombe for inviting us. Sheila has now become a member of our branch.

The Boat Trip on the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal from Gloucester quays on The Queen Boadicea II was enjoyed by the ladies. It was an honour to travel on this Boat; she was awarded her bronze plaque for service during the 1940's helping with the evacuation of troops from Dunkirk. The Lunch later at Café Rene was enjoyable too.





Once again some of our branch were proud to attend the Poppy Fields of Remembrance, the Festival of Remembrance as well as taking part in the Remembrance Service and March past at the Cenotaph.



We finished off our year with an afternoon at Gloucester Quays Victorian Christmas market, lots of Christmas gifts were bought. Then a yummy lunch at Topoly's restaurant, after which some of the Ladies went back to their childhood and had a ride on the Carousel.



HEREFORD Lynda Armstrong

At the end of July, Hereford Branch held their 30th Birthday and Veterans Lunch at The Green man Fownhope. We had a fabulous lunch with members and friends from other Branches. We were lucky enough to have two of our founder members in attendance, Mrs Mary Nicholls and her daughter Joyce, and they were very happy to cut our wonderful birthday cake that had been donated by Rosemary Jones and Joyce Nicholls with funds from Ena Price's legacy. Mary Woollard arranged to have the cake made for us to mark the occasion.



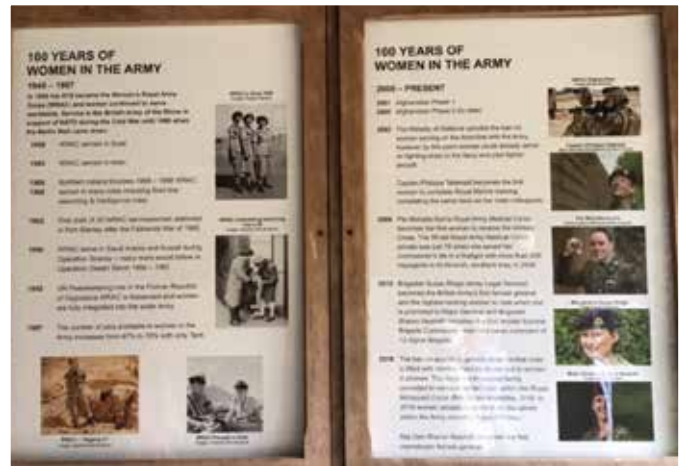


Branch 30th birthday celebrations

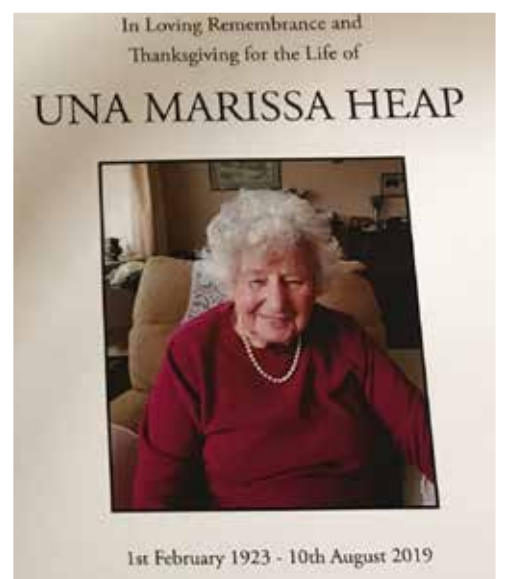
An amazing 14 of our members then went up to York to meet with up to 140 other ladies to participate in the annual 10k, another fabulous weekend and everyone again managed to complete the course.



We then, a couple of weeks later, had our annual picnic at Queenswood Park. Joyce Nicholls, as always, arranged our day perfectly. Queenswood had put up display boards to depict 100 years of Women in Service - from different stages of service throughout the years, from the ladies that felled the 100yr wood at Queenswood, to Violette Szabo an SOE agent during WW2, right up to the present day of Maj Gen Sharon Nesmith. We had another great turn out for this annual outing, and we look forward to 'Picnic, The Return' August 2020.



We sadly lost one of our ATS ladies in August, Mrs Una Heap. Una reached her 96th birthday in February and played a big part in WW2 as an ACK ACK girl. The Branch, with Sharon parading our Standard, paid our last respects and saw Una off on her final journey.



A few of us took a trip to Penderyn in Brecon to do a tour of the Whiskey Distillery, at the end of September. As you can well imagine, quite a few bottles were sampled and then purchased; to end the day we then all headed off to The Red Lion Inn for a sumptuous lunch.



Dinner Club was exceptional this year and those of us from our Branch that attended had such an amazing time. Well done and thank you very much DC Committee from us all.

Sharon Baker-Joyce paraded our National Standard at the 10th anniversary of The Battle of Gheluvelt at the end of October. A few of us attended the memorial service, Mary Woollard laid a wreath and we were then invited back to the Worcester Royal British Legion Club for a lovely lunch.



With some of the ladies in London for Remembrance Day and others in Guildford, we were unable to parade our Branch Standard in Hereford this year, but Louisa Ash kindly laid our Branch Wreath for us. Thank you, Louisa.

Over the coming weeks we will be attending other Branch Christmas meals then our Branch will be holding our Post Christmas Lunch in January. Our Branch meetings will resume in February and then we will be making our way to the NMA in March for the unveiling of the Statue.

Hereford Branch hopes everyone had a lovely Christmas and we wish you all a very Happy New Year.

OXFORDSHIRE

Chrissie Townsend

We in Oxford have been busy this year and I would like to share some of our adventures with you. We increased our meetings up from bi-monthly to monthly, so we now meet on the second Saturday of every month with a regular group of between 5 and 10. It is lovely that we are also still growing.

Our year has involved lots of get-togethers, as well as our monthly meetings. We have joined with the Association as well, in March we had a group of 6 at the Grand Reunion in Southampton which was just amazing as I also had the pleasure of being presented to the Countess of Wessex, fortunately due to her rank I did not have to do a full curtsy, she would have had to help me up!



April, we went to the National Memorial Arboretum. A group of 10, we hired a bus from the council, who were more than happy to help - school buses have certainly improved since my day. We also went in a good number to the rededication of the plot at the NMA in the summer.

While May saw Jean and I back in the presence of Royalty when we went to the Garden Party at Buckingham Palace. We then continued to have our meetings which were happy chats and support for all.



In October a fine group of us went along to the Dinner club, and in November had our usual parade in Bicester for Remembrance. We are, at this time, planning our annual Christmas Bash.



We have had a really good year. I would like to thank all of the girls for their support, and a particular thanks to Jean Mills who is not only a great friend but also a fantastic treasurer.

Looking forward to 2020.

PHOENIX

Sheila Johnson

Preparations for the Branch's Christmas Lunch, on 7th December 2019, are underway and the event will be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Nottingham. Hopefully, decent weather will increase the prospects of a good turnout.

There was a successful outcome for the Branch members who entered the 10k run on 4th August 2019. So much so, a repeat 'performance', albeit at walking pace, will occur at the 2020 event to be staged in Cardiff on 6th September.

The dedication of the WRAC Statue will be held at the National Memorial Arboretum on 21st March 2020. This significant gathering will end the wait for substantial recognition of the Corp's input to the Military.

In accordance with a rotation sequence as agreed, Phoenix Branch will be hosting the Wales and the West AGM during September 2020.

Angie and Sandy Stanford-Barclay clearly demonstrate the need for adequate 'pump priming' for the official tasks during 2019/2020! Good luck to them and Best Wishes to all Branches.



Phoenix Branch secretaries post Remembrance Sunday parade

SHROPSHIRE

Ali McGowan

Greetings from the Shire.

Where has this year gone? and by the time you read this we will be well in to the next one! When I last left you, we were getting ready to take part in the York 10k as part of the WRAC Lionesses 100 women team. I am pleased to report that 6 members of the branch took part, and all completed the course, some faster than others. I am not saying we were slow, or that we were the last, but they were clearing the course and closing down just behind Chris Powell and I.

In August we joined Chester Branch on their Annual Canal Trip with lunch. As always this was a most enjoyable day. September saw Wales and the West Area AGM which was organised by the Marches and Mid Wales Team and what a wonderful day they gave us.

September saw the Branch enjoy what has now become our Annual Cream Tea, unfortunately our usual venue has now closed but Chris did a grand job and found us a very acceptable replacement. We took the opportunity to take our Annual Branch photo as well.



October was a very special time for the Branch as we were able to present a cheque for over £1,500 to Colonel Carl Meyer at the Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Hospital, Oswestry. This was the result of the Branch's fundraising over the last year in support of the proposed Military Wing of the Orthopaedic Hospital which will treat Veterans from all over the Country.



We are now beginning our run up to the Christmas and New Year Celebrations which is always a busy time for the Branch. May we take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy New Year from the Shire.

EAST MIDLANDS

LEICESTERSHIRE & NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Chris Corker

AUGUST:

Saturday 3rd 9 members of the branch met in the entrance to ASDA Fosse Park and set up a display of ATS and WRAC memorabilia. Cathy Munro MBE kindly let us borrow her "ladies" in the form of mannequins in various uniforms and other memorabilia which were a great hit with ASDA shoppers. It was a very profitable few hours and the customers of ASDA were very generous and contributed just over £600 to branch funds. Thanks to Debbie Kenney for arranging this event.



Dot Ryder, Debbie Kenney, Lyn Wenham and Carol Morris



On Parade



Sue Slattery

Tuesday 13th we held a special lunch to commemorate all Women who had Served in the past 100 years at Devonshire Place attended by 24 women with 7 special guests including Ali Brown and Cathy Munro MBE. Cathy had a selection of her memorabilia on display which gets more eye catching each time it is on show. It is a mini museum on its own. Other members bought a selection of photos and records of service. It was with great delight that we welcomed back to the branch Ann Atkinson, Doris White and Doris Doswell. The two Doris's were presented with their MID citations from Ali Brown. The cake was supplied by ASDA brought along by Debbie Kenney. 9 ladies who did the ASDA fund raising were presented with an EMA Certificate of Appreciation by Area Co-ordinator Cathy Munro MBE.



Doris and Doris

Tuesday 20th the branch had lunch at the Fosse Way Bowling Club. This was a new venue as previous years we had always used the Sailing Club. Sadly this site has not been maintained by current users and the branch felt it unfair for those fit and able members to have to spend 2 days cleaning before it could be used. The Bowls Club was a great success and had an amazing dishwasher which Debbie Kenney mastered and the dishes were done in minutes. This event was attended by 24 members and 9 guests. A return next year is definitely on the cards.

SEPTEMBER

Sunday 8th September 3 members plus the standard attended the service and parade for the Leicestershire Parachute Regiment in Somerby.

Tuesday 10th the branch held its annual Harvest Festival and raised funds for the branch. We are still trying to fit in the Beetle Drive and Dominoes.

Saturday 14th saw 5 members of the branch attend the Fleckney Festival and again Cathy came up trumps with another fantastic display in her new gazebo. We are proud to announce that Gus took part in the dog show and won first in the Veterans Class (how apt!), third in the Rescue Class and Reserve in the Best in Show.



Gus



Cath Munro MBE and Debbie Kenney

Sunday 15th Lyn Wenham took the standard to the Battle of Britain service in Leicester.

Wednesday 18th 15 members and 9 guests went for lunch on the Great Central Railway at Loughborough on the steam train which ran at a very steady speed to Leicester North and back again. The lunch was excellent and those who opted for afternoon tea had more than they bargained for. Back at Loughborough station some members left for home and a few of us went for another ride to Rothley and being such a lovely warm day an ice cream was definitely the icing on the cake.



Grand Central Railway

OCTOBER

Tuesday 8th our AGM was held and it was lovely to see Ann Atkinson again and also Pam Richards taking time off from Chelsea. The election of the officers of the branch took place and surprise surprise everyone was re-elected. I have taken over the task from Sue Slattery of producing the branch contribution for the Lioness. Chris Gardner is to update the branch Facebook page with the yearly programme and to remind members of the events. A vote was taken amongst those present regarding the post of Chairman but as there were no volunteers it was decided that this post would fall dormant as it would be impossible to replace Doris White after her many years as the Chairman.



Debbie Kenney, Sue Slattery, Carol Morris, Rose Barbour & Lyn Wenham with standard

Friday 25th 4 members and standard attended the RBL County Poppy Appeal Launch at Beaumanor Hall.

Saturday 26th Sue Slattery and Lynda Pollard attended the RBL Festival of Remembrance at De Montfort Hall.

NOVEMBER

Friday 8th Sue Slattery and Debbie Kenney attended the Leicester Riders basketball match for their Poppy Match.



Sue Slattery, Debbie Kenny & Mascots

Tuesday 12th we held our Christmas Fayre to boost the branch funds.

We are looking forward to attending the EMA AGM and Christmas Lunch in Lincoln on 7th December and the branch Christmas Lunch on the 10th our final event of the year.

I am sure members are with me when I say a huge thank you to the committee who all work so hard to bring this branch together and provide such wonderful meetings and events.

Our best wishes to you all

Lincoln & District Jo Worsdall

Our members continue to meet each month at St Mary le Wigford Church in Lincoln (next to Lincoln Rail and Bus 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 say goodbye to one of our members Mary "Terri" Marshall, who sadly passed away on Friday 9th August 2019 in Kettering General Hospital, Northamptonshire. Terri was born in October 1935 and joined the Women's Royal Army Corps in 1953 where she served until 1962. Throughout her time, she touched the hearts of many and will be remembered for her wicked sense of humour and smile that could light up a room. Terri was the loving mother to Malcolm Marshall and Grandmother to Penny and David Marshall. She will be sorely missed but is now at peace and will leave a legacy of beautiful memories to all of her friends and family.



Terri Marshall

Our members enjoyed a pub lunch at Woodcocks by the Foss Dyke, with Joyce arriving in style on the ferry and entering with a lovely young ferryman on her arm!



Ladies at Lunch

Remembrance Parades and Services were attended by many members across Lincolnshire, the Standard was presented at Lincoln's Remembrance Service in Lincoln High Street.



Jo Worsdall Lincoln Remembrance

We enjoyed an outing to a local garden centre in November for a cuppa, cake and a chat, and to look at the Christmas displays. The day was extended by also deciding to have lunch



Ladies at Lunch



Sue Smith (Branch Secretary) sitting in the chair (she has requested this for our monthly meetings).

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 and good humour on the go!

Peterborough & District Dot Ryder

Since our last report the ladies of Peterborough & District Branch have been fairly active.

In June 6 members of our branch met up for afternoon tea at a local garden centre where we enjoyed homemade scones, they were so good that Pauline Mason took some home with her. We plan to make this a regular event.

During Armed Forces Day 4 members took up the offer of a free meal at the Toby Carvery.

In July Cathy Munro MBE located names of ATS ladies who had served during WWII and unfortunately died during their service. Jean Legg managed to find 1 grave in the Yaxley cemetery, that of W/256557 Pte Katherine Millicent Smith (Kitty) who passed away on 09 July 1944 aged just 19 years, and Sue Akehurst found a grave belonging to W/249478 Pte Jean Marie Coster in Eastfield cemetery, which is looked after by the War graves commission.



Jean Legg, Chris Corker and Dot Ryder met up and visited the grave of Kitty Smith and were dismayed at its condition. We, as a branch, decided to adopt Kitty's grave and do a tidy up job. As you can see by the photo we made quite a decent job. Both of these ladies belonged to the Royal Artillery.



In August our Branch received an invitation from Leicester & Nottingham Branch for members to attend their Centenary Lunch. Unfortunately, only 3 members could attend, Chris Corker, Dot Ryder and our area co-ordinator Cathy Munro MBE. It was a lovely afternoon with good food and company.



On the 21st September we made arrangements to travel to Cambridge using the Busway, which is a double decker bus using ordinary roads for part of the journey and the bus travels on a track for the rest of the journey and drops people off in the middle of Cambridge. Only Chris Corker and Dot Ryder made this trek but it was a real adventure seeing places that you would never see using a car and the main roads.

In October 4 members went to the "dogs" - Peterborough has a very good Greyhound track and is well supported. Unfortunately, there were only 4 attended this event because one of our members (Pauline Mason) had broken her ankle and was unable to drive. But we had some fun and we won on every race.

November is always a busy month because of Remembrance Parades. On the 7th 4 of us got together at Kitty's grave and held a small service to remember her and all women who lost their lives. We then had a very enjoyable lunch again at the Farmers.

The Branch are looking forward to attending the East Midlands Area AGM and Christmas lunch in Lincoln and meeting up with friends.

EASTERN Wendy Hooton

I have been busy, as usual, since the last edition of the Lioness. I was fortunate enough to be a sofa guest on the Lesley Dolphin show on BBC Radio Suffolk. I had 45 minutes to talk a little about my career, hopefully reaching out to ex WRAC/ATS ladies who don't belong to the WRAC Association. It was also a great chance to promote the WRAC Association and my fundraising through the WRAC Lionesses. It was great fun; Lesley's questions weren't challenging at all so there were no awkward moments!



I have been to the Field of Remembrance at Westminster, where I planted crosses for some of our ladies who have now passed, and I marched at the Cenotaph this year. I went to the local Battle of Britain Parade in Bury St Edmunds with Catherine Parkes and Maggi Pilling WRAC Veterans.





I was honoured to have my portrait painted by Scott Pohlschmidt from London Fine Art Studios at the National Army Museum (see separate article) as part of the WRAC Association Centenary year.



CAMBRIDGE Branch celebrated Avril Williams 70th birthday with a buffet at her home. Lots of laughter and memories re-lived. Looking forward to our Christmas lunch.

CHELMSFORD Branch hasn't met socially but I have been in touch with Gina Shadrack. I am pleased to say after a few health setbacks Gina is feeling much better and I wish her well. We will be meeting up in the New Year.

COLCHESTER Branch has been meeting up regularly and the panto themed Christmas Party was amazing. They took over a small hotel for the weekend. Everyone's costumes were brilliant as were the games. This event was all organised solely by the Chairman Kerry Warnes - well done!

HERTS/BEDS/BUCKS Branch had a lovely lunch at The Plough in Shepreth, organised by Chris Barratt. We also had a fabulous Christmas lunch at the Plough in Leverstock organised by Christine Barnwell. I was just pleased I turned up at the right Plough!!

Due to everyone's commitments the next lunch will be in April organised by Mary "Rusty" Blake.

NORFOLK Branch continues to meet up for social events organised by Lyn Hatch. A few members went to the outstanding workshop at the National Army Museum, Behind the Scenes - Legacy of the Lionesses.

I'm looking forward to the Christmas lunch where we will celebrate two 60th birthdays, Lyn Hatch and Annette Jackson and a 70th birthday, Lynda Oldfield.

Nonagenarian Joan Awbery ATS has had an amazing year being invited to Norwich City Football Club as the Community Hero to place the match ball on the special plinth prior to kick off. Recently Joan has had a few health setbacks but is now back at home. I wish her well as she heads towards her centenary celebrations.

SUFFOLK Branch has a new lease of life. I'm delighted to say that Liz Ives has set up a Facebook group WRAC Association Suffolk Branch and a WhatsApp group for those not on Facebook Suffolk WRAC. Liz will be arranging a date to meet up in the New Year. I wish them well.

Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous Year to you all.



I have been rounding up sponsor money for the WRAC Lionesses annual 10k run which is helping towards the WRAC statue to be unveiled at the National Memorial Arboretum in March. I am proud to say we have raised over £35,000. A tremendous effort by all, not to mention a fabulous weekend!

The esprit de corps was in abundance at all the events. There is nothing like it, such camaraderie.

Colchester & District Heather Savin

The Eastern Area lunch took place on 31st August and was held in the Pegasus Club, Colchester. Several branches were represented with lots of banter over an Italian buffet lunch, the trio of chocolate desserts were delicious. Sadly Wendy "Hoots" Hooton announced that she would be standing down from the role of Area Co-ordinator after 10 years. She was thanked by all for her hard work and support. She will be a hard act to follow but I am sure she will not be completely disappearing.

Our annual fundraising BBQ took place on 1st September at the Ancient Briton pub with both Alison Brown and Wendy Hooton in attendance. Dawn Aney, once again, did an amazing job organising the event. The food was plentiful with a cornucopia of Dawn's delicious homemade cakes, somehow we found the room to sample them (with my favourite being the Rocky Road), doggy bags were provided and used. With proceeds from the raffle we were able to make a donation to the WRAC Association and to Colchester Armed Forces & Veterans Breakfast Club.



**Dawn -
cakemistress
supreme!**



Summer BBQ

The WRAC Dinner Club was held on the weekend of 12th/13th October at the Crown Plaza in Nottingham. Several members of the branch were able to attend and had their own table. I am reliably informed that no foliage was harmed over the weekend – Kerry and Vinnie!!

Wendy Hooton informed us of a headstone in Colchester Cemetery belonging to W/Private Christine K M Went ATS who died on 30th December 1947 at the age of 22. A cross of Remembrance was placed on the grave and the branch plans to adopt the headstone and make regular visits. Remembrance Sunday was observed at various locations by individual branch members and some have helped with collecting for the Poppy Appeal.



***Pte Went Headstone
in Colchester Cemetery***

Our next event will be our Christmas Dinner on 7th December. Once again it is being held in the Best Western Claydon Country House Hotel and this year we have chosen the theme of "Pantomime" – Oh no it isn't I hear you say!! A full (censored!) report with photos will follow in due course.

ROYAL HOSPITAL, CHELSEA Marjorie A Cole

TIME MARCHES ON

Ten years ago history was made the The Royal Hospital, Chelsea, when it accepted three ladies to become Chelsea Pensioners. In January 2009 myself, Dorothy Hughes, Winifred Phillips and Gillian Macdonald spent four days at the Royal Hospital having a taster of what life as a Chelsea Pensioner is like.

Moving on from there, Dorothy and Winifred, both in their 80's, entered in March 2009 and as I wasn't 65 until July 26th I had to wait to arrive the day after my birthday.

When I arrived I volunteered to become a Chapel Warden. I was asked if I wanted to wear my shaks (hat) in Chapel – I said no, I've become a Chelsea Pensioner and I will wear the same uniform and have the same rules as the men, also do the same things as the men ... within reason!

In fact, Dorothy, Winifred and I laid the path for future ex-ATS and WRAC ladies by living out the Corp's motto of 'Gentle in manner; Resolute in deed'.

Winifred passed away three years ago, and Dorothy passed away early December 2018. So I am the original one of the first three ladies.

To commemorate ten years since ladies became Chelsea Pensioners, the fundraising department commissioned a London chocolatier to make a chocolate head of me for a Channel 4

television programme called 'Deliciously Chocolate', shown in April. It was great fun having a mask made of my face by Paul Wayne Gregory. He then took the mask back to his workshop in Cricklewood to fill with edible chocolate, and to complete the head, made a replica of a tricorne. Paul brought the finished head to the RHC for me to see with the fundraising team. It's like the old saying "two heads are better than one".

This was just one of the amazing events I have taken part in.

Of course, taking part in parades, especially the Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall is an absolute honour and makes me proud to be a Chelsea Pensioner, and especially a member of the WRAC/ATS Association.

When I look back to all the events I've taken part in, and people I've met, and new friends I've made all over the world, it seems like a dream.

God willing I hope to carry on doing all these things, wearing the Queen's uniform, as a Lady Chelsea Pensioner.

"Gentle in Manner. Resolute in deed".



***Three Roses at Chelsea Flower Show 2019 -
Pam Richards, Madge Cole & Helen Andrews***



I/P Marjorie Cole

Thank you one and all for your contributions – they make great reading, and it is wonderful to see you all so active, busy and living up to Comradeship and Esprit de Corps. I love seeing (and reading) all your reports, and the photos, but could I just ask that you send your photos separate to your report text (preferably as attachments to the report email) – I struggle to copy some of the photos when they have been kindly inserted into a Word document report.
Editor

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: Vacant

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: 12noon, 2nd Wednesday of the month, March, June, September and December

Where: Lynton Court Table restaurant (in Premier Inn), 47 Christchurch Road, Boscombe, BH1 3PA, for informal lunch

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

Evon Roberts on 01752 215780

Portsmouth

When: 10.30 1st Saturday of the month

Where: The Maritime Club, Queen's Street, Portsmouth

Contact: Sally Watson Tel: 02392 666712

Salisbury

When: Mixture of 'coffee meet-ups' during the day and Saturdays; and 4th Wednesday of the month.

Where: Contact Amanda Foster for details

Contact: Amanda Foster via email: SalisburyWRACVets@gmail.com; Facebook: WRAC Salisbury Branch; or Twitter: @SalisburyWRACVets.

If you prefer to phone contact HQ Office and we'll put you in touch.

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

When: 19.00, every 3rd Wednesday of the month

Where: RAFA Club, 41-43 Belle Vue Rd, Swindon, SN1 3HN

Contact: Sharon Bingham via email: slbingham1@yahoo.co.uk or Tel: 07872 643776

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 613552

Greater London

When: 14.00 on a Saturday in March, May, July
and September
Where: Royal Hospital, Chelsea, 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

Worthing

When: 10.00 on the last Tuesday of the month (except
December)
Where: Lancing Parish Hall
Contact: Janet McKechnie Tel: 01273-249746

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: Please phone Babs for details
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 Gloucestershire Branch, as
a member and/or at something ...
Contact: Ann Stack at anndewsnip@hotmail.com OR-
Frances Fairclough at fran.f@btopenworld.com or 07739
344846 and/or look them up at Facebook Group:
Gloucestershire Branch WRAC

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

When: 2nd Saturday of alternate months, 12.30 for lunch
Where: Littlebury Hotel, Bicester
Contact: Christine Townsend Tel: 07756 681441

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

Worcester

If you are interested in joining a new WRAC Worcester
Group, to meet up for a chat and coffee, please contact
Jane Griffin-Ash via: 'Worcestershire WRAC Group'
Facebook group, Phone 07880732245 or email
janebash@hotmail.co.uk.

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.smith4529@gmail.com
Tel: 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 tonymitz1@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

Lincolnshire

When: Very informal group, meeting as and when commitments allow.
Where: Different locations, to share travelling
Contact: by email Mary@faver.plus.com or Suebeever@btinternet.com.

Peterborough & District

Contact: Pam Sussex Tel: 01733 243944.
Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/groups/WRACPeterborough

Sheffield

When: 11.00 on the 1st Thursday of the month except January and August
Where: The Benjamin Hunstman (Wetherspoons), Cambridge Street, Sheffield
Contact: Brenda Colley Tel: 01709 365828

York

When: 14.00-16.00 on the 1st Wednesday of the month (except August), phone to confirm
Where: Haxby & Wigginton Methodist Church Hall, Haxby, York, YO32 2JJ
www.haxbyandwiggintonmethodistchurch.org.uk
Contact: Feona Dixon Tel: 01904 633438

EASTERN

Area Co-ordinator: Lyn Hatch
Email: wracnorfolk@aol.com

Cambridge

Contact: Jean Farrington 01223 503867;
Email - jeanfarrington62@gmail.com;
Facebook - Cambridge Branch WRAC Association
Please phone for when, where and what

Chelmsford

Contact: Georgina Shadrack Tel: 01245 251088
Please phone for when, where and what

Colchester

Contact: Kerry Warnes 07763122474;
Email - kerrypam@hotmail.com; Facebook- WRAC/ATS Veterans of Colchester and Surrounding Areas
Please phone for when, where and what

Herts/Bucks/Beds

Contact: Chris Barratt 01799 526671; Email - 78chrisbarrett@gmail.com; Facebook - WRAC/ATS (Herts, Beds, Bucks) Please phone for when, where and what

Norfolk

Contact: Lyn Hatch Tel: 07929 070665; email wracnorfolk@aol.com; Facebook: WRAC/ATS Veterans Norfolk. Please phone for when, where and what

Suffolk

Contact: Liz Ives - 01473 807099 / 07714-259949;
Email - eaissafa@outlook.com
Please phone for when, where and what.

NORTHERN

Area Co-ordinator: Lesley Roberts

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 & Where: 1st Wednesday of each month, 12.30, at the RBL, 73-75 Albion St, Leeds, LS1 5AA
And 3rd Saturday of each month, 11.00, at the Cosy Club, 53 Albion St, Leeds, LS1 5AA (except January)
Contact: Jayne Maitland email: jayne849@msn.com
Tel: 07904-084491

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

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

Manchester

When: 11.00 on 3rd Sunday of the month
Where: Veterans Garage, Barton Aerodrome
Contact: Pip Flegel pipflegel2009@gmail.com 07375095532

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: Helen Jephcote

Email: scotland.ni.area@wracassociation.org.uk

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
Email: wracaberdeen@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

If you co-ordinate a branch or a group who get together, whether face-to-face or 'virtually', let us know and we will include you in this list of 'branches'. There is no longer any difference between 'formal' or 'informal', 'face-to-face' or 'virtual'. It doesn't matter how or when you meet up. We are just keen to know that women who served are meeting up to support each other with comradeship, friendship, memories, etc. Let HQ office know and we will also include on the Association website.

Editor

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/>

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.

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 11 Basepoint, 1 Winnall Valley Road, Winchester, SO23 0LD. All prices include postage & packing.

See our website for information on our WRAC Association membership gift vouchers



WRAC Association Fleece

£28.00

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



WRAC Association 2020 Diary

£5.00

Get organised with the WRAC Association 2020 Diary, week to two pages



WRAC Association Polo Shirt

£20.00

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



WRAC100 Commemorative Coin.

£10

WRAC100 design on both sides in leatherette presentation box.



WRAC Association Brooch

£5.00



WRAC Pin Badge

£4.00



ATS Pin Badge

£4.00



Reversible Storm Jacket

£44

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



Dog Collar & Lead Set.

£10

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



Printed Scarf

£18

Printed with WRAC100 logo
700 x 700cm



WRAC Association Paperweight

£15.00

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



WRAC Association Ballpoint Pen

£5.00

High quality WRAC Association branded ballpoint pen in dark green



100 Wonderful Women

£9.99

100 stories of women's service over the past 100yrs

All our usual memorabilia items still available

Violet Elaine Titt



I am writing in regards to my grandmother who served in the ATS. Attached is a photograph. Her name was Violet Elaine Titt. She always told a funny story that her superiors would never call her by her last name and so she was always known as Violet, although she preferred Elaine.

The first unit she was sent to, she manned an anti-aircraft gun. After a while she went to her Commanding Officer (I believe) and she said she didn't want to kill anyone, because they were all someone's son. So the CO asked her what she wanted to do - she said she wanted to be a police officer. They sent her off for training and her first job was to go and retrieve someone from the Isle of Wight who had gone absent because she was scared. Then her next task was to give 'charges' out to women who were not wearing the correct stockings, instead they would draw a line up the back of their leg (I think I have that right). After a while my grandmother went back to the CO who apparently said, "what is it now Violet?" And my grandmother said that she did not want to retrieve women who were scared or give out charges for something that she herself was doing. So, the CO said, "ok, what do you want to do then?" And so my grandmother said she wanted to be a cook/chef. They sent her off for training again. My grandmother was eventually posted to what I believe was a castle where the Royal Family were located in Scotland and she became one of the cooks for the Queen etc.

Unfortunately, that is all I know of her story. I understand that you don't keep records, but if any of the information above cross references with anything you know, I would be very grateful if you could share it please. **[Editor - Can anyone help?]**

Danny Kaine
(Grandson)

F coy No 6 Group London District ATS Group, June 1945

These images were sent in by Miss Joy Simmons, whose mother served in the ATS. She was enquiring what she might do with the photo once her mother is no longer with us – to which I have advised the National Army Museum could be tried.

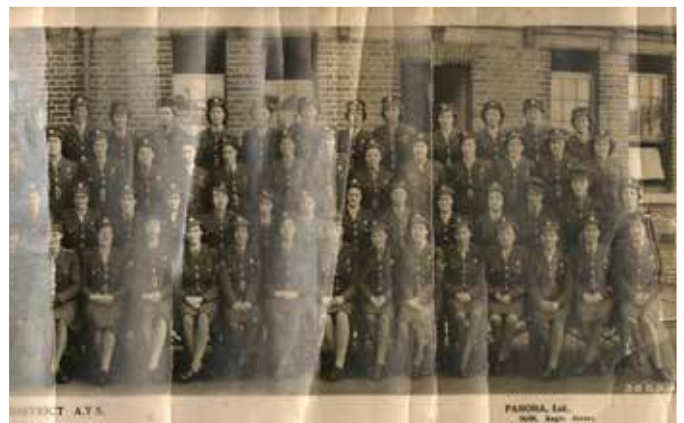
Does anyone recognise anyone in these photos? If so, let HQ office know and we will pass onto Miss Simmons.

Editor

"I have found a photo of F coy No 6 Group London District ATS Group, dated June 1945. I have attached a copy (in two sections as the original is 24 ins long). There may be a portion missing from the middle section in the photos, but the copy I have is one complete picture. Unfortunately, it is creased in places, but the majority of the faces are legible".

Thank you for your attention.

Joy Simmons (Miss)



Emily Wilkinson Congratulations on 100th birthday

Details: WRAC Association member, Emily Wilkinson, turned 100 on 27 December 2019. Keri Trigg joined her family on the day get some pictures of the happy family. A picture of Emily on her birthday featured on the front cover of the Shropshire Star. Mrs Wilkinson, who trained and served at MoD Donnington, moved in to the Old Rectory Home in Tenbury Wells in December 2018.

To celebrate her milestone birthday yesterday, Mrs Wilkinson's daughter Jean Prosser hosted a family party at her home nearby.

Mrs Wilkinson, née Cox, grew up in London, and served in the Women's Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) between July 3, 1942, and June 27, 1945.

Over the course of the war, Mrs Wilkinson was stationed at Chelsea Barracks, Aldermaston, Donnington and Reading.

She met her husband Charles (Charlie) during the war, and they were married on December 9, 1944.

As well as daughter Jean, the couple had two sons, Alan and Eric, and the family lived in Essex. Mrs Wilkinson moved to Tenbury a year ago to be near her daughter.

Following in her footsteps, Mrs Wilkinson's great grandson is due to begin training at Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

To honour Mrs Wilkinson's 100th birthday, the Women's Royal Army Corps Association has granted her lifetime membership.

© Keri Trigg & Jamie Ricketts/Shropshire Star



L/Cpl 35221 RANSOME (Norma)

Just received my copy of the Lioness – what lovely colourful pictures; couldn't put it down. In my group photo of Fernhurst Camp, the name of our Captain was THOM, not Thorn – my writing isn't so good these days. [Editor's note – sincere apologies for wrong spelling]

I was demobbed June 1950. After several months working in a private nursing home in Harrogate I re-enlisted in Leeds. I did not have to go back to training. I was posted straight to Zebra Camp Shrivenham, near Swindon, then went to work in Becket Hall in the Officers Mess, Military College of Science. I was soon made up to L/Cpl in charge of eight waitresses – Paddy, a Cpl, was in charge of the other shift of eight girls. When on the 5am shift I would light stoves and tea urns for the Officers breakfast, then call the cooks and waitresses for duty. The girl cooks and waitresses got tea and toast in bed, which I went around with, when they were off duty. Captain Thompson was our CO, a lovely tall lady.

The first Easter holidays most Officers and other ranks went on leave. Mr Hobbs, civvy caterer, lived at the Gate House with his wife and son. He got a coach for us all to go to the Isle of Wight, taking an urn of tea, sandwiches, boarding a boat at Southampton - we had a lovely day. When off duty we would go to the Lacorno in Swindon, to a packed dance hall. Diana Dors used to sing there.

I went on an NCO's course to Huron Camp at Hindhead in Surrey for two weeks. The Saturday I came back I was put on Orderly NCO duty at Zebra Camp, something I had never done before. The duty officer left me with phone in entrance just yards from the Oxford to Swindon road. All in darkness, no lights on the country roads, when a little black car drove in full of drunken yanks from Brize Norton, looking for women's air base. I said the Regimental Police are coming on their rounds; they made a hurried exit, to which I breathed a sigh of relief.

November was Poppy Day and Church Parade. I was right marker and had to leave the church near the end and stand in the middle of six tall soldiers, for the girls to line up behind me.

I met my husband in Aldershot NAAFI Club while on the NCO's course and we were married in April 1952. Soon after, in May, I came out of the army but I still miss those days. I never got the green uniform. I think it was 1953 when the uniform changed.

A lot has changed since those days, but I wouldn't have missed it for the world.

Norma Ransome (now 88 years)

Lioness 2020 / 2

Copy deadline 30th July 2020

Send in your articles, reports, reminiscences, photos, etc as soon as you have them – it helps beat the rush and helps the Editor in putting the magazine together.

Photos welcome, but please include as separate attachments to the associated report (not within it). Also, if you can let us know who is in each photo we will endeavour to attribute accordingly.

Many thanks
Editor

W/380899 L/Cpl Joyce E L Stone (28 Nov 1934 – 4 Jan 2020)

Joyce Stone (Harris, upon marriage) worked as a shop assistant on leaving school until she joined the WRAC in April 1953 for a three-year engagement. She obtained a third-class Army Certificate of Education in August 1953 and became a clerk with 27 Ind Coy WRAC the same month. [Editor - See obituaries for more details].

Joyce kept a group photograph taken at WRAC Depot, Queens Camp, Guildford in 1953. It is of No 1 Coy Platoon 4, May 1953. Her surname being Stone, she acquired the nickname "Rocky". Some of the names written on the reverse of the photograph are:

- P Wallworth
- Jean Sims
- Renee Wilson
- Julie Vincent
- Taffy Williams
- B J Willis (Pip)
- Iris Simpson
- J Starkey
- Pamela Watson
- M Whittaker
- June Snapes
- Eileen Turner
- Lee Thompson
- E Smith
- Norma Threlfall
- Beryl Thorley
- J Wilkinson
- Maureen Sweetman

Other identifiable WRAC colleagues in Mum's photo albums are:

- Isobel Schofield (Clanger)
- Rena Baird
- Liz Butler
- Jean Bray (photographed by a sign announcing "26 Indep. Company W.R.A.C. Anti-Aircraft Command", at Carpenders Park in Hertfordshire)
- Elsie Boyd

(Editor - sorry no copy of photo sent / received)

Mum's WRAC service included a year with Middle Eastern Land Forces (Jan 1955-Feb 1956) in Egypt and Cyprus. In Cyprus she was attached to 3 GHQ Signal Regiment (her papers include a copy of the Christmas Day and Boxing Day menus for 1955, and the service sheet for a Lessons and Carols service at Christmas 1955). For a while Mum was stationed at Highfield House in Hertfordshire, when she was working at Anti-Aircraft Command at Stanmore. That's where she met Brian Harris, whom she would marry in 1957.

Courtesy of the Harris family

MEMORIES OF A DIFFERENT LIFE W/340350 JOAN LOIS WATKINS nee WRIGHT ATS



Joan was born on 14th May 1928 in Manchester and fully remembered the dismay of her family when war was declared on 3rd September 1939. That same month, Joan started at Flixton High School for Girls and threw herself into the whole educational experience on offer. This included manuscript, first aid, shorthand and typing, and laundry alongside her favourite subject of English. The bombings became a regular occurrence as the family's house was on the route to the Manchester and Liverpool docks. As Joan writes in her notes:

"What a scary world we lived in – no lights to be shown, food rationing and later clothes rationing, carrying a gas mask everywhere, no fruit from abroad like lemons, bananas etc, windows crossed with sticky brown paper to save shatterings and that's just a few of the inconveniences."

During the raids the safe place for Joan and her siblings was on a single mattress on the slab in the larder under the stairs with Joan on a stool. She saw neighbours being bombed out and rescuing the little they had left. Her father was a voluntary fire fighter in her street as well as being in the Home Guard.

Having left school at 14, Joan joined a group of women in the Land Army who were working for the local Council, growing vegetables for the war effort. She remembered vividly how interesting these women were and they seemed so grown up to her and so full of life experiences. In the autumn of 1945, Joan became a member of the Women's Farm and Garden Association. This was an organisation that placed women on a 6-week course of basic horticulture or farming with the guarantee of a permanent job after the course. As an opportunity to broaden her outlook and go somewhere different, it was perfect and so Joan travelled to Harrison Hospital for the mentally ill in Charminster to start the course which took place in the large hospital gardens. The course attracted no pay, but the accommodation was in a modern comfortable nurses' home. Joan remembered the course for all the different people she met and not so much for what she had been taught.

With the end of the war in 1945, Joan had been working for the Parks Department in her local Council for two years and was anxious for a move. Too young for the Women's Land Army, she joined the Women's Farm and Garden Association and took up a job at High Park Gardens, Burghley, Stamford, the seat of the Marquess of Exeter. The gardens at Burghley were magnificent with a large walled garden, a deer park, a cultivated 100 acre field and many large greenhouses equipped with coke fired boilers. Accommodation was a bothy shared with 7 others; no electricity or bathroom and the dreaded "sentry box" in the garden.

However, the fascination for Joan was, once again, the people she worked with. These included 5 girls from the Women's Land Army, housekeepers and butlers and too many male gardeners to mention. Joan's days passed in a blur of gardening, household jobs such as cooking and completing the deliveries of milk to the big house. Friday night was bath night. The water was heated in saucepans on the range - a long slow job - with the end result being about 4 inches of tepid water. Not a huge pleasure but a necessity after a week working. Sunday was a day off and was spent catching up with laundry and other chores.

A big change was the arrival of German prisoners to work in the gardens. Everyone was given strict instructions not to talk to them. Joan remembered them as a happy group who sang, laughed and strolled about quite unconcerned.

Aged 18, Joan began to assess her life. She enjoyed her work but felt that her social life was non-existent. She needed a change if she was to meet other young people and so, on 3rd October 1946, at Nottingham, Joan enlisted in the ATS. In her own words, the job choices "were rubbish". She desperately wanted to be a driver as she felt that they were the elite with their khaki trousers, brown boots, sleeveless padded jackets and an air of nonchalance. However, she had no experience in driving so Joan opted for telephone operator without really knowing what it was. Joan passed all the tests and soon came to love the role as it suited her abilities for speed, concentration and lots of patience. Having seen a notice asking for volunteers to go to the Middle East, Joan and a few of her friends volunteered and landed in the Canal Zone. However, after a few days Egypt proved disappointing so when the opportunity arose to go to Jerusalem, Joan quickly put her name forward.

The British Military HQ in the Middle East was in the King David Hotel which, at the time, was in an extremely volatile and dangerous area. Access was confined by barbed wire and guards and confinement to barracks was normal although Joan remembered going to the WVS run "Hole in the Wall" for tea breaks. Every day there were reports of bombings and British soldiers being killed. One memory remained especially vivid and that was the night of 13th May 1948. Joan remembered the tension in the air and being on night duty amongst the noise of the city. As the clock struck midnight, the State of Israel came into being and Joan celebrated her 20th birthday on the roof of the King David Hotel to the sound of gunfire and to the sight of the many fires burning.

On return from Jerusalem, Joan was demobbed and joined the Women's Land Army in Hereford. By the age of 20, she had packed her life full of memories and unique experiences that stayed with her for the rest of her life. The following is from Joan's ATS Release Book:

"A very good switchboard operator who works well and conscientiously. She has a capable pleasant manner and works with intelligence and initiative. A reliable and thoroughly satisfactory Auxiliary".

I became aware of Joan's early years when I was contacted by her daughter, Hilary Deakin, via Jan Brodie-Murphy. Joan sadly passed away on 3rd May 2019 and Hilary had found lots of Joan's ATS memorabilia including her service records, items of uniform and her own biographical notes. I felt her story must be shared with others and all of the above information has been taken from Joan's service records and photographs. What amazing experiences and all before Joan was 20 years old.

Ali Brown

High Heels & Beetle Crushers (The life, losses and loves of an officer and lady)

A compelling memoir of post-war Britain. Jackie Skingley grew up with limited career choices but joining the Women's Royal Army Corps offered her a different life, living and working in a military world, against the backdrop of the Cold War. Packed full of stories reflecting the changing sexual attitudes prior to the arrival of the pill and the sexual revolution of the mid 60s, Skingley's memoir denotes a shift in the political and social fabric of the era. Follow her relationships with the men in her life from finding her first true love, which through a cruel act of fate was denied her, to embarking on a path of recovery.

"A fascinating look into life in Britain on the brink of the 'Swinging' Sixties. Well-bred, conventional young ladies still wore gloves and hats, while among them a rare few, more adventurous, rejected the stereotypical careers expected of them and chose a life in the armed forces, with all its considerable challenges. In this coming-of-age story written from the heart, the author relates her life, loves, heartbreaking loss, and her military career. I found it an engrossing read and valuable social history record that took me back on a wave of nostalgia to a bygone era".
Review by Susie Kelly, author of *I Wish I Could Say I was Sorry*.



WRAC COMMISSIONING COURSES 48, 49 & 50 ... Bobbi Chilton

... held their joint 50th commissioning re-union luncheon at the Victory Services Club on Wednesday 6 September 2019. An excellent luncheon and lots of catching up as some of us had not met for 50 years.

Ilona Mathie summed up the day in the following verse:

Mo took the bus to London,
Most others came by train.
The sun shone on the righteous,
There was no drop of rain.

We met up at the Victory club,
Who made a lovely lunch.
How could they not be nice to us?
We're such a super bunch!

You'd never think we're getting old,
We've scrubbed up pretty well.
(Though first thing in the morning,
My mirror thinks "oh hell"!)

It really is quite hard to think
That fifty years have gone
Since we were wide eyed young cadets -
That surely must be wrong.

So much has happened to us all,
So many twists of fate
Since Agnes Doig marched us about,
And we never dared be late!

We chatted, caught up with the news
And drank to absent friends.
Suzanne sent us some bubbles,
For her absence made amends.

Big thanks must go to Bobbi,
Her efforts weren't in vain.
In fact, we really should resolve
To do it all again!

Attached photograph is of those who attended.



WRAC AND RMAS SISTERHOOD OFFICERS DINNER 23 November 2019 Sue Hatton & Ish Thomson

The WRAC Officers Dinner is now called the WRAC and RMAS Sisterhood Officers Dinner, and there are a substantial number of ladies attending who have never worn the WRAC capbadge.

On Saturday 23rd November, the WRAC and RMAS Sisterhood held their annual dinner in the Victory Services Club in London. Over 100 people, including some guests attended. Music (including 11 regimental marches) was provided by a quartet of saxophonists from the Army Medical Services Band - including Dawn Wragg, who was in the WRAC Staff Band. Brig (Maj Gen Des) Celia Harvey gave an excellent speech, and we made the Court and Social page of the Telegraph on Monday 25th November!

The next dinner will be held on Saturday 21st November 2020 at the Victory Services Club, for more information email wracofficersdc@gmail.com.



Celia Harvey





WRAC and RMAS Sisterhood
Brig Celia Harvey spoke at the
WRAC and RMAS Sisterhood
Officers' dinner held on Saturday
at the Victory Services Club.

WRAC Dinner Club

NAUGHTY but NICE Sylvia Stubbs

Another great weekend of friendships old and new!





THE TALE OF A DINNER CLUB VIRGIN Cheryl Noble

I eventually succumbed to pressure and joined WRAC Dinner Club this year. The pressure never ends, as I have now been asked for a pen picture of the weekend.

The date arrived and off I set, delivered to the local railway station by my beloved with the words of "have a good journey and behave yourself!" I did neither!!! My train did not get to the first station before we were stuck for 3 hours by a broken down train ahead - missed my connection. Eventually got on another train, it was packed so they closed the doors before announcing we would have to wait at least ½ an hour for a driver. I got to the hotel with minutes to spare before a dinner engagement with some old colleagues. Now I could relax.

My old friend Babs Hyndman and I shared a room. It was clean, warm and shall we say "snug". The highlight of that was Babs screaming when she nearly fell out of bed. Oh! And one morning I woke to see Babs in her coat, sat up in bed. Why? Because I had stolen all of the duvet and she didn't want to wake me as I looked so peaceful. Now I know why she is my friend.

The dinner and entertainment were fantastic, and I danced a lot and sang a lot and drank a lot!! To my surprise I found I had gained a spouse. A lady, who will remain nameless to spare her blushes, came over and introduced herself. She could see my blank eyes so went on to say she thought it was time she introduced herself to Marg's wife, the lovely Denise. I had to tell her I loved Marg Davies to bits, but my name was Cheryl and I certainly was not married to Marg. I laughed so much, even though the poor lady was so embarrassed.

On Sunday I volunteered to help Marg, along with my friend Babs, to help take down some banners outside the room where the "do" had been held. It really was a simple task but then the blu-tack had to be removed so the banner could be rolled up for storage. I thought I explained an easy way to complete the task BUT what I said had been taken the wrong way. I looked at Marg and Babs and they were both shaking with laughter. I then realised what I had said. Ooops!!!! It is too rude for print but suffice to say, it ended up with three ladies of a certain age rolling on the floor crying with laughter.

Thank you to the Committee for all your hard work. Thank you to the bar staff who had to get in more rations, as we all drank the bar dry not once but twice, and to all the hotel staff. They were totally shell shocked as they expected a load of old ladies sitting drinking tea and going to bed by 10pm.

If you want to know what was said you will have to ask Marg, Babs or myself at the next WRAC Dinner Club. Roll on October!





DATA PROTECTION ADVICE FOR BRANCH SECRETARIES AND AREA CHAIRS

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

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

Do ... :

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

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

Don't ... :

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

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

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

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

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

May 2018



WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS DINNER CLUB

Application for Membership

Please complete the form in BLOCK LETTERS

* Miss/Ms/Mrs/Rank (if serving)/Other (please state):

Name: Known as:

Address:

..... Post Code:

Tel No: Mobile:

Email:

* WRAC/TAVR Service From: To:

Army No: * P/W/WO: Last rank held:
(present rank if still serving)

Surname when serving: Date of Birth:

Trade/Job when serving:

Decorations:

I wish to join the WRAC Dinner Club and enclose:

* **£13.00** (includes initial joining fee of £3.00) for **5 Year Membership**

Or

* **£18.00** (includes initial joining fee of £3.00) for **Life Membership**

Cheque/Postal Order must be made payable to: **WRAC Dinner Club**

Signature: Date:

Please return the completed form to:

WRAC Dinner Club Membership Secretary

Ali McGowan, Meld House, Hawthorn Road, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY3 7NB

A 2nd Class Postage Stamp would be much appreciated. Thank you.

* Please delete as appropriate

(WRAC Dinner Club Membership Secretary to input Membership No:)

***For WRAC Dinner Club
please do not make cheques out to the WRAC Association
and do not send to the Association Address***

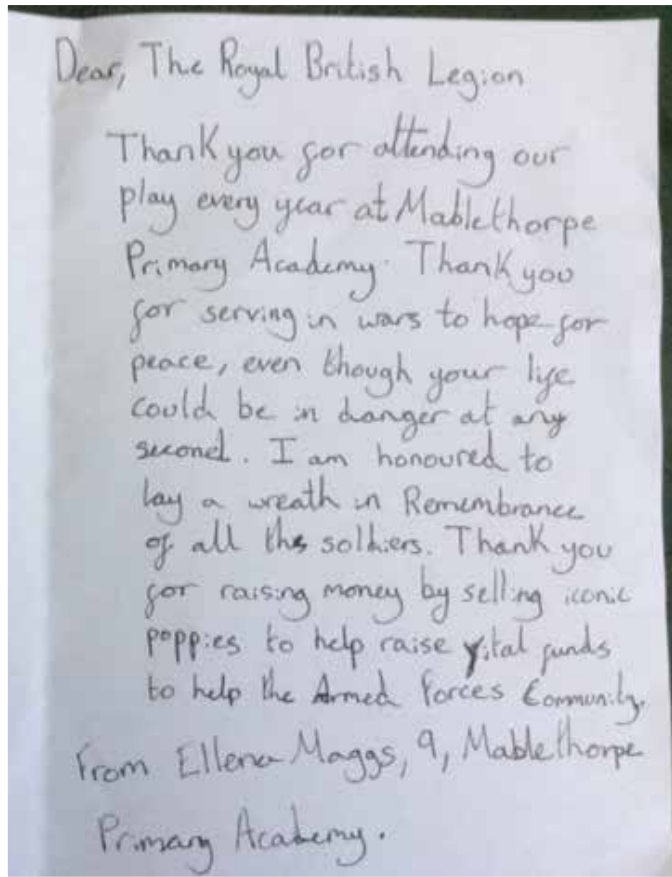
LEST WE FORGET Sylvia Stubbs

Mablethorpe Academy is affiliated to the R.B.L. branch in Mablethorpe, and on the 7th November they put a play on to explain the meaning of the Poppy. It's very moving and all the children interact, singing and playing out a Soldier leaving for war never to return.

Every year a different class takes the lead and every year it reduces us to tears. After the play we meet the children for refreshments and the questions they ask us come thick and fast - from the boys "Have you fired a gun" to the girls "Can you boss the boys"??

We tell the girls of the W.R.A.C. and they love the stories of our time in the service, and they tell us of their ambitions in life, and all to soon they have to go back to class.

This is a lovely letter we received which makes us very proud of the children in our community.



VERY PROUD TO LAY OUR WREATH IN MABLETHORPE Sylvia Stubbs & Marion King



REMEMBRANCE SERVICE Wendy Hooton

The Rose Garden, Abbey Gardens, Bury St Edmunds.

I had the pleasure to be invited to this Remembrance Service where we remember members of the US Forces, 94th Bombardment Group on the 40th Anniversary of the dedication of the Group Memorial. This is dedicated to those who fought on the beaches at Dunkirk, the thousands who crossed the Channel to rescue those who were trapped and all that took part in the Normandy Landings. Wreaths are laid at all the memorials including the Royal Anglian and RAF Honington Memorials.



REMEMBRANCE CEREMONY Wendy Hooton

Commonwealth War Graves, Wretham, Norfolk

I had the honour of attending a Remembrance Ceremony dedicated to the memory of Czechoslovakian and Polish personnel who served in No 311 Squadron and those who are buried in the Commonwealth War Graves at Wretham in Norfolk. It was a very moving ceremony attended by local dignitaries and ambassadors from the embassy's in London.

The Squadron, which was formed at RAF Honington, completed 1,021 operational sorties and dropped more than 1,300 tons of bombs on enemy targets, these included Berlin, Bonn, Boulanger, Brest, Cologne, Flushing, Essen, Kiel, Paris and Turin. The Czechoslovak personnel had formerly served in France and had escaped to this country at the time of the French collapse.

Such courage and bravery is so humbling. LEST WE FORGET





- at breakfast I was only just telling the girls about my 2 pet Budgie's one called Tom Tit and the other called Willy!! What a coincidence. We were offered delicious Bacon Rolls and a drink and began meeting and chatting to our fellow Veterans. It was then all aboard on a glorious hot sunny day!!

Each ship was allocated a trainee sailor - we had a lovely chap called Adam; we were very gentle with him!! It was a spectacular sight to see all the ships in line sailing down the Thames, passing Hampton Court Palace and Kingston upon Thames, towards our destination Teddington Lock. On arrival we moored up in the lock itself. We all gathered on the island between the two locks, for a service of thanks to the little ships of Dunkirk, where they have a dedicated memorial.



DUNKIRK LITTLE SHIPS VETERANS WEEKEND

14th Sep 2019

Pat (Budgie) Rosewell

When offered a ticket from Jan Foster, who is a QA veteran and a fellow WRAC Association member, to sail on a Dunkirk Little ship I jumped at the chance!! Jan had a better offer, as herself and 'Scouse', her husband, were off to Colditz. Both events were organised by the Not Forgotten Association. I was joined by my good friend Susan Jennings and Jan's best friend Gaynor Morris Webster QA. I invited the girls to stay with me as I live only 15 mins from the Venue.

We reported to the Royal Yacht Club at Hampton Court at 11am. We were greeted with a warm welcome and handed a picture of the little ship we would be sailing on. When we saw the name of our ship, we all fell about laughing!! It was called TOM TIT!!





After a very moving service it was all aboard again. We proceeded through the lock where the Thames becomes tidal, so it was life jackets on as required by law. We then did a U-turn and proceeded back through the lock, where we were greeted by lots of enthusiastic well-wishers who had come to cheer the wonderful little ships. On the journey home we were served drinks, Champagne, and Tit bits. On arrival back at Hampton Court, we were served a delicious meal by the local WI. The evening finished with a drumhead service with the lowering of the Ensign. We were all very moved by the services and it was lovely to spend a day with the Royal Navy.

The next day was the turn of the WW2 Veterans and some Chelsea pensioners. They sailed in the other direction to where I live, in Shepperton, to the Mariners club where they were wined, dined and entertained with music and singing. They were then transported back the Yacht club by vintage cars. I was able to catch up with our very own Marjorie Cole, who was whisked away in a Vintage Red Morgan Sports Car. Our most grateful thanks to the Not Forgotten Association for a wonderful day.



Can anyone out there tell me anything about W/378638 Pte M G Joyce WRAC? The only thing I know about her is that she was awarded the Africa General Service Medal with clasp Kenya for her service in east Africa between October 1952 and November 1956. This is a scarce medal to the WRAC with only around 70 having been awarded. If she was, say, eighteen when she went to Africa, I estimate she would now have been between 81 and 85 years of age so sadly, she may no longer be with us. All assistance in this matter gratefully received.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Allan Stanistreet
W01 RAOC (Retd)

[Editor – any information you may be able to share with Mr Stanistreet, please send to WRAC Assoc. HQ and we will forward on].

Dear Ma'am. I am the son of one of the crew of Lancaster PA278 which crashed off North Corsica while taking 19 ATS ladies back to Naples. No trace was ever found. I have just put up the story into a 94-page A5 paperback with 37 illustrations. It sells for £9 via my email address. I was put in touch with Joan Awbery in 1993 & we moved on from there eventually! If any members would be interested in hearing about it please contact Bob Whymark via robertwhymark326@gmail.com.

Yours Bob Whymark

Response to an Association Facebook Post:

Sandy Ackerson saw the Facebook post about GCHQ (last year) and wanted to let everyone know that her partner used to work with GCHQ and was indeed the person that discovered that the Argentinians were on the Falklands!!

VETERANS DROP-IN EVENT

10.30am
Last Thursday of every month.
Guildford Fire Station.

All welcome – usually involves tea/coffee etc.
(Editor: We have been informed of this via Guildford Borough Council's Civic Office and have no other information)

Meet our new recruit Private D Sweeney

She is still learning how important it is to be a member of the W.R.A.C. She is working hard to promote the Association and to meeting everyone at the Reunions and events.

Sylvia Stubbs



D-DAY STORMING FORTRESS EUROPE

Osprey is launching a new range of graphic novels in 2020 from their Under Fire series.

The first one is D-Day Storming Fortress Europe. The Normandy Landings have been immortalised in both historical narratives and popular culture. D-Day blends both styles into one new exciting publication. Publication date of January 2020, paperback, rpr £20.00.

Later in the year they will publish Guadalcanal (March 2020) and The Battle of Britain (May 2020). Each graphic novel provides authentic historical detail combined with vivid illustrations and expert story telling.

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). Traditionally, *Lioness* magazine is available as an audio version. However, due to the size of recent issues we have been / are unable to offer this service at present. We apologise for this break in service

Lioness. Articles for inclusion in the next edition of *Lioness* must be received by 30th July 2020. Please email to editor@wracassociation.org.uk. **Please type the text into the body of the email, not as an attached document. Please send photos as attachments to the email; do NOT embed them into a document,** as it makes life very difficult this end. Ideally send just 3 or 4 good quality photos (jpg format only). 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, Centenary Memorabilia available to purchase online via the website, by post (prices include P&P) or by phone. See page 63 for details.

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

Thu 05 Nov 2020 Field of Remembrance, Westminster Abbey

Sun 08 Nov 2020 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 2020**

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 08 Nov 2020 Guildford Borough Remembrance events

Sun 08 Nov 2020 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). In 2019 we cemented our historic links with our 'mother city' by leading the Parade, 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 (office.manager@wracassociation.org.uk) or letter only.

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

Service Records. Veterans UK is your one stop shop for all queries about Service Records, Medals, Pensions and much more. Go to www.veterans-uk.info or phone 0808 1914 2 18.

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 2 18.

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

WRAC Officers' Dining Club. The WRAC Officer's Dining Club Dinner will take place on Saturday 21st November 2020 at The Victory Services Club. For more details email wracofficersdc@gmail.com or visit the Facebook Closed Group 'WRAC Officers' Dining Club'.

**Don't forget –
the WRAC Association is here to:**

SERVE
SUPPORT WOMEN WHO / SERVED

regardless of age, length of service, ATS, WRAC or current capbadges, whether TA or Regular.

So, let's all continue to build on the success of this Centenary year and make sure we continue to promote the Association and Membership so more ladies benefit from 'comradeship, esprit de corps, maintenance of tradition, friendship and support'.

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.

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.**

SEEKING O.A.T.S. (Seeking Oldest ATS lady / ladies)

We are aware of at least half-a-dozen ex-ATS who are over 100, but you may know differently. The Association is pleased to honour those ladies who reach 100 with a gift and Honorary Membership ...

... But we are particularly keen to know who is / are the oldest surviving ex-ATS ladies (whether currently an Association Member or not). We are particularly keen that The Nation appropriately honours our female veterans for their unstinting and ground-breaking service, and on reaching significant ages. So, if you are aware of anyone who is ex-ATS, and/or over 100, please do let HQ Office know.

In this VE- and VJ-75 anniversaries year we are keen to ensure that women's voices and experiences are heard, alongside those of your male colleagues – so, if you, or anyone you know, joined and served in the ATS before the end of WW2 (in May 1945), please also let us know.

EXTENDING OUR REACH TO THOSE WHO SERVED (but aren't Association Members)

We are aware that over 300,000 women served in the ATS and 154,000 in the WRAC up to 1992, of which just over 3,000 are Association Members. We know some are no longer with us. We would love to know if you have any ideas for how we might spread the word even more, especially to the just under 150k that served but are not Members.

Don't forget – a Member can have served in the TA, Reserves, been attached to any/whatever other regiment, served for any amount of time. As I learnt at the Grand Reunion, you all have two principle things in common – you are women, and you have all served. Age, service-length, rank, service era, role, cap-badges you worked alongside – all are equal, because you served.

So, can you help us to increase our 'reach' and the support you / we can give each other. Naturally, the best support is given in/through Branches, but members are welcome to just join HQ-branch, especially if they have little/no access to a local geographical branch. The more the merrier, and the better we can 'support women who serve / served'.

As we used to say in Young Farmers Clubs – "get a friend in the club".



MARKETING / PR REPORT

Curious PR – We have continued to work with Curious, specifically for press and media coverage. Recent success' include items around the National Army Museum exhibition and associated events (eg portrait painting, etc), new '100 Wonderful Women' book, Remembrancetide and an ex-ATS and Members' 100th birthday over Christmas/New Year.

We are continuing to work with them over potential Benevolence Fund and other stories, including winter-hardship issues, along with publicity around the forthcoming WRAC-statue unveiling (in March).

The current contract with Curious is due to conclude soon. Much has been achieved, particularly around the original objectives:

- 'To increase membership' (up by over 300 individuals),
- 'To raise the Association's profile'.
- 'To promote the Benevolent Fund'

Challenges (or as originally titled 'Threats') still exist, primarily –

- among 'ladies who served but forget we [still] exist',
- retaining membership,
- 'limited lifespan' (particularly of the Ben Fund).
- getting Ben Fund beneficiaries stories (although Julie works hard to get the stories which help 'sell' the fund and benefits, including improving links with the ABF Case Studies Liaison Officer).
- the perception that still exists, particularly among some ATS and older ladies, that them signing the Official Secrets Act still applies to this day.

Communication (publicity) channels successfully utilised include:

- National Army Museum exhibition and presentations,
- Word of Mouth (via members, branches, AFD, etc),
- using Case Studies in Trade and National press/media,
- Documentary DVD and 'shorts'.

Stories have appeared in a wide variety of media including:

- The Sunday Times, Independent and Daily Express;
- The Lady, Army & You, Women's Own, and National Army Museum PR materials;
- BBC 5 Live (more than once), Channel 4 News, BFBS radio and television,
- KCW Today, and various local broadcast stations and regional papers/magazines.
- Current work includes a possible National Award nomination and ceremony.

Through these media:

- 2018 potential reach included 6.9m broadcast listeners/viewers (for the year) and 110k written circulation.
- 2019 potential reach included 2.137m broadcast listeners/viewers (per week) and 33,277m written circulation – for 2019 this would have equated to around £26,570 'advertising equivalent spend'.

Conversations have started about future PR support since we believe that:

- We absolutely need to maintain the PR/publicity momentum we have built up over the past 18mths – 2 years.
- The Association does not currently have the level of expertise within itself and in this specialist market to absorb and maintain the success we have achieved over the past 18 – 24 months.

Going forward some obvious potential, specific PR opportunities exist this year, namely the ending of World War Two 75 years ago, both within Europe (VE-75 in May) and Japan/the Far East (VJ-75 in July).

We have also seen considerable success in getting the Association's name and purposes 'out there' recently on the back of some ex-ATS ladies reaching major milestones in the lives.

Social media – posts continue to go out regularly. Posts have linked in both with events (AFD, NAM, Remembrancetide, etc), Curious PR items and general news from the Association. Connectivity with social media users continues to increase all the time, both within Association – HQ, branches and members – and among other service veterans and female groups.

Media enquiries – HQ office continues to receive enquiries that come direct to us (eg for obituaries, the BBC in relation to D-Day and The Queen's service-time, etc) and we respond, or re-direct, as appropriate and able.

Press releases – The Office continues to help branches with press releases, particularly for generic things such as Remembrance and national events. We encourage branches to make use of these, or write your own – local press and media are often looking for stories to tell and people to speak to. They are, of course, looking for the local element and so your attendance at, or organisation of, something might be just what they need to hear. And of course, on the back of that you are promoting your branch and the Association as a whole and the fact that you/we are here to "Support women who serve / served".

If you think you have a story worth telling, whether in general about your life in the Army or post-army please let us know. Your experiences of how members 'support each other' (whether with friendship, esprit de corps, events, or through financial Benevolence) are invaluable in helping us to promote all that the Association stands for (and the ATS and WRAC alongside it).

Penny Muxworthy
Assoc. Sec.

BFPS Commemorative Covers

The BFPostal Service approached us to design and sell a limited number of Commemorative 1st-day Covers, which went on sale beginning December.

They arranged for 50 to be signed by Dame Kelly Holmes. Another 6 were donated to the Association for us to get signed separately. We are extremely grateful to Heather Stanning MBE (gold-medal winning British Olympic rower); and to Sandy Hennis and Nics Wetherill (members of the record-breaking Ice-Maidens group who walked unaided to the South Pole).

We therefore still have:

1 Commemorative cover signed by Dame Kelly Holmes and Heather Stanning

3 Covers signed by Heather Stanning

1 Cover signed by Dame Kelly Holmes, Sandy Hennis and Nics Wetherill

And 3 Cover signed by Sand Hennis and Nics Wetherill which will form part of the AGM Raffle prizes.

Penny Muxworthy
Assoc. Sec.

THE SCAR FREE FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES CONFLICT WOUND RESEARCH PRIORITIES AND LAUNCHES CALL FOR PILOT STUDIES

Medical research charity, The Scar Free Foundation, today (5th September 2019) announces its key research priorities to achieve scar free healing within a generation for survivors of conflict wounds. The research priorities encompass three main themes: acute wound care and diagnosis; the biology of scarring; and life-long scar impact, revision and rehabilitation. The Foundation is also launching a call for applications to conduct pilot studies which address these vital areas.

As part of The Foundation's grant from the Chancellor using LIBOR funds to establish The Scar Free Foundation Centre for Conflict Wound Research (*), the world's first specialist military and civilian conflict wound research centre, an initial £150,000 is available to support pilot or feasibility studies, which have the potential to be developed into larger-scale research programmes with higher awards from the Foundation and other funders. The research priorities are the result of the Foundation's 'Conflict Wound Research Symposium', held at The Scar Free Foundation Centre for Conflict Wound Research, a ground-breaking national facility based at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham. The centre's main aim is to minimise the psychological and physical impact of scarring and limb loss among armed forces personnel injured in service and civilians wounded in terrorist attacks, and the work carried out is actively supported by senior armed forces personnel including the Chief of the Defence Staff, Chief of Defence People and the Surgeon General. The research undertaken at the Centre is part of the Foundation's longer term strategy to achieve scar free healing within a generation.

Dave Henson, Co-Founder of The CASEVAC Club (**) said: "The membership of the CASEVAC Club is comprised of unexpected survivors - those that, by right, should have died on the battlefield. For many, surviving wounds of their severity is unheard of and new to medical science. We are actively engaging with this research because the knowledge that can be gained will provide insights that can increase the likelihood of more unexpected survivals in the future, and improve the outcome for survivors of traumatic injury in general."

Research Priorities:

Theme 1: Acute wound care and diagnosis (development of therapies and diagnostic tools that are appropriate for treating acute injuries sustained in austere conflict environments, where risks of contamination, extremes of temperature, and transportability are all factors.)

Theme 2: The biology of scarring (to better inform new treatments by understanding how the body heals and protects itself following the types of trauma that are likely in future conflicts, including chemical, burn, and complex blast injury.)

Theme 3: Life-long scar impact, revision and rehabilitation (improvement of therapies for seriously injured armed forces personnel and veterans to reduce and correct scars, and to promote resilience to the psychological impact of their disfiguring injuries.)

(*) The Scar Free Foundation Centre for Conflict Wound Research has been established in partnership with the University of Birmingham, University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust, the Centre for Appearance Research at the University of the West of England, and The CASEVAC Club. Crucially, the centre is closely integrated with a wider network of academic and clinical institutions in the UK and beyond to ensure that the work is inclusive and at the forefront of scarring research.

(**) The CASEVAC Club is an organisation set up by and for armed forces personnel wounded in recent conflicts. The Club, based on WW2's The Guinea Pig Club, aims to assist in the advancement of medical science and treatments for all, help others experiencing traumatic injury and provide wounded personnel with a close-knit community. Members of the CASEVAC Club are working closely with The Scar Free Foundation Centre for Conflict Wound Research.

VETERAN-FRIENDLY GP PRACTICES

In November Cobseo (the Confederation of Service-charities, of which we are member organisation) reminded everyone of the following:

"The Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) with NHS England and NHS improvement have developed the 'veteran friendly' accreditation to help GP practices meet the healthcare needs of ex-forces patients. Ask your GP if your practice is accredited, and if they are not please encourage them to get in touch with RCGP at veterans@rcgp.org.uk. And please do spread the word among the veterans you know, so that together we can make ever more GPs aware of this free resource".

From NHS England (RCGP website <http://bit.ly/32vtnQn>)

"Clinical commissioning groups are responsible for the commissioning of health services for veterans, reservists and service families registered with NHS GPs in their area. Despite this, there is evidence that GPs are unsure of how many of these individuals are registered with their practice and more guidance is needed on how to meet the health needs of these patient groups. Furthermore, there is a need to improve the identification and coding of these individuals, with a linked aim of further increasing the understanding of their health requirements and improving their care and treatment.

To help address this issue, the Royal College of General Practitioners is working with NHS England and NHS Improvement to accredit GP practices as 'veteran friendly'. This is just one of several initiatives being undertaken to improve NHS care for the Armed Forces community (which includes serving personnel, regulars and reserves, veterans and their families).

CQC website mentions the programme in the Tips and myth busters for GP practices where the CQC's Senior National GP Advisor shares agreed guidance to best practice for surgeries to consider. Members of the armed forces community are part of the population group 'people whose circumstances may make them vulnerable' checked by CQC, and the veteran friendly accreditation is listed as a resource to support GP practices in care for veterans and their families.

Ask your GP if your practice is accredited, and if they are not please encourage them to get in touch with RCGP at veterans@rcgp.org.uk.

And please do spread the word among the veterans you know, so that together we can make ever more GPs aware of this free resource. More information on RCGP website <http://bit.ly/32vtnQn>, or via <https://www.rcgp.org.uk/clinical-and-research/resources/a-to-z-clinical-resources/veteran-friendly-gp-practices.aspx>

THE LORD KITCHENER'S HOTEL, LOWESTOFT



This building is over 150 years old and opened as a hotel for ex-service men returning from war so they could recuperate from their injuries 100 years ago. It still has some of the original features lovingly preserved.

If you have not had the opportunity to stay in the Lord Kitchener's Hotel now is the time to book. It came under new management second half last year, and offers a heavily subsidised break to those who have served in the military. There are ten rooms, of which six have a wonderful sea view [depending on the weather!]. What you pay here for a week's stay on half board you can pay for bed & breakfast in guest houses in the area, so is excellent value for money.

The rooms are comfortable and have tea/coffee making facilities and a cooler, ready for a cool aperitif before dinner while you sit and look out of your window at the beach and sea. Of course, each room has a television and free wi-fi. Additionally, while you go down to breakfast the room fairies go into your room.

Even though televisions are each room, there are also two large screen televisions in the two tv rooms, and if you want to sit in comfort and read there is a quiet room. There is a good selection of books, along with a 3/4 size snooker/billiards table, and for the musician in you, a piano.

The meals are cooked on the premises and Andy remains as Head Chef. The main problem with the food, is that it is too good. If this will be your first time here then remember you will need to have expanding waist bands on clothes to allow for the extra calories you will be consuming, and the extra pounds you will notice when you get home and leap on the scales.

(Head Chef) Adam and Carol, who have the task of ensuring everything runs well, are also a mine of information on what to do and see in the local area.

If you suffer with mobility problems, there are two scooters you can hire so you can get around easily. The buses run close to the hotel, and the train station is only a short bus ride or walk away.

Weather permitting, there is a long sandy beach, which in 2019 was in the Best Beach Guide, so if you are brave enough how about a dip before breakfast? Or for the cowards, [and sensible people] a walk along the beach will bring you to a lovely beach-cafe for ice cream, snacks and of course the tea and coffee. There are three local museums which are well worth a visit along with Sparrow's Nest Gardens.

So, if you are WRAC/ATS you will be given a very warm welcome. If you want to come with a friend who has never served then there is a small extra charge for them. As well as the Armed Forces, friends who have served / are serving in the Merchant Navy or any of the emergency services will also be welcomed. This is a wonderful hotel; I have now stayed three times, but it needs people to use, so come and see what it is like.

*Ezri Tigan
Ex WRAC*

BRIGADIER (RETD) SHIRLEY NIELD CBE Died 18th January 2020



Brigadier Shirley was one of the first female graduates to complete a full career in the WRAC. She took a degree in Psychology at Sheffield University followed by a Post Graduate Diploma in Social Science. She was a member of Sheffield University OTC for four years during which time she was commissioned into the Territorial Army. On leaving University she took up an appointment as Probation Officer with the City of Manchester at the same time joining the local WRAC TA Battalion. In her own words, she found both to be 'early learning experiences' of a very special kind.

She was granted a Short Service Commission in the Regular Army in 1961 as a specialist Personnel Selection Officer and worked in this field for the next 14 years. As Senior Personnel Selection Officer (SPSO) for the WRAC and our sister Corps, the QARANC, she was instrumental in developing and streamlining the system which ensured that servicewomen were selected for the right trade to suit their aptitudes and academic abilities i.e 'putting round pegs in round holes'. I was privileged to be among her small team of PSOs in the early 1970s and I recall very keen questioning and discussions with her, usually for me to justify my selection decisions! However, she equally gave wise counsel and guidance and was genuinely interested in helping her young officers develop their potential.

In October 1975 her career path changed, and she went on to hold a series of Regimental appointments in Northern Ireland, Germany and UK. She was promoted to Colonel in 1982, and was the last Commandant of the WRAC College in Camberley, before it became the Fourth College of the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in 1984, after which all female officers were trained at Sandhurst. There were many teething problems

on this transition, but the WRAC College Team took them all in their stride thanks to Brigadier Shirley's pragmatic yet forthright approach. A former Officer Commanding Cadet Wing recalls the first time that she and Brigadier Shirley had to attend a dinner at Sandhurst just after the WRAC College had become the Fourth College. At the end of the meal the PMC called on Mister Vice (the most junior male subaltern) to propose The Loyal Toast. He stood up and said "Gentlemen, The Queen" whereupon there was an audible sharp intake of breath as the assembled diners realised he should have said "Ladies and Gentlemen, The Queen", however they all stood up and toasted Her Majesty whilst averting their eyes from Brigadier Shirley who was looking slightly 'crossbeaked' at this gaffe! At the end of the meal the two WRAC Officers retired to the Ladies before returning to the Bar for a Nightcap. Waiting for them at the Bar was Mister Vice, looking suitably contrite and apologetic with a bottle of Port and two glasses! He was, of course, forgiven!

Brigadier Shirley reached the pinnacle of her career in 1986 when she was promoted to Brigadier and appointed Director WRAC and Honorary ADC to Her Majesty The Queen. During her first few months as Director a study was convened to look at the Role of Women in the Army (ROWITA Study). Although Brigadier Shirley was very sad, as most of us were, that the WRAC was likely to be disbanded and integrated into the regular army, she continued to lead the Corps with her customary aplomb and incredible strength of character. And so, it was business as usual while discussions took place about the future of the WRAC and her unit visits, both in the UK and Abroad, gave the Corps the courage to face whatever the future outcome would be.

One of the highlights of her tour as DWRAC was an official visit to the United States – the visit started at Andrews Airforce Base (where American Presidents usually arrive and depart from!) with her very own private plane and it only got better! Two helicopters at her disposal, in case one failed, addressed as 'General' short for Brigadier General, and absolute 7 Star treatment all the way! She loved it all, apart from the 7am Breakfast meetings with the other 'Generals'. However, despite her dislike of early mornings she was never late on parade! On her last day in the States Brigadier Shirley was allocated a quiet room and a stenographer in the UK's Pennsylvania Avenue Embassy to write all her 'Thank You' letters. She showed her first drafts to her British Escorting Officer only to be told that Americans sack officers who only merit a very good visit rating! It was suggested that she used words such as 'superb' and 'wonderful' in her letters, which she duly did. On returning to her apartment after putting Brig Shirley on the plane back to UK there was a note waiting for the escorting officer too thanking her for a superbly outstanding wonderful visit!

On another occasion it fell to me to escort the Director on a Grand tour of BAOR and Berlin visiting every unit that employed WRAC – this took three and a half weeks, at the end of which I had got to know Brigadier Shirley's routine extremely well – lots of very late nights and early mornings which took its toll on me but never on the Director! Her energy levels were amazing because, as well as her many work commitments, we managed to pack in trips to museums, concerts, operas and still had time for a nightcap! As DWRAC, she was also the UK's representative on the NATO Committee for Women in the Armed Forces, and on one occasion she addressed the Conference in her own inimitable way, whereupon the Director of US Women rushed over to her and declared that Brigadier Shirley was a National Treasure!

Irene Cook 3rd December 2018



Many amusing things happened to her during her career and her description of them lost nothing in the telling: like the time she fired the Noon-Day Gun on a blustery day in Hong Kong and got covered in smoke; or having her handbag snatched by a monkey on the Rock of Gibraltar; and in Brunei watching a staircase rising out of the floor like a huge glistening cinema organ from which stepped the bejewelled figure of the Sultana of Brunei! I can still hear her giggling about this magnificent sight!

Socially Brigadier Shirley was great company. She was a 'Bon Viveur' and a brilliant raconteur. After her official 'Dining Out' from the Army as Director she stayed the night with two officers with whom she had recently worked. Once back at their home the malt whisky came out and Brigadier Shirley was in full flow. The hours ticked by and one of the officers crept off to bed, only to be woken up at 5am by the other officer and they swapped roles, Brigadier Shirley still being in full flow. By 7.45 am they eventually persuaded her to go to bed! Both officers reckoned that was the most unusual 'stag' they had ever done!

I count myself fortunate that I worked for her in the WRAC Directorate where we all felt that we belonged to a very close-knit team. However, working for Brigadier Shirley was no sinecure; she could be a hard task master and did not suffer fools gladly. Her direct, no nonsense approach taught me early on that she was someone not to be trifled with. She was both intellectually stimulating and challenging, sometimes uncomfortably so, yet it was always delivered with a mischievous twinkle in her eye and a wry smile. Only Brigadier Shirley could get through her whole Army career and only take the Army Basic Fitness Test twice!

On retirement in 1989 she was awarded the CBE. She retired to Norfolk and looked forward to pursuing her many hobbies and frequent trips to her home in France. Yet, ten years later she stepped back 'into the Breach' at short notice, to become Vice President of our WRAC Association due to the sudden illness of the then incumbent. Much was achieved during her time as VP and she made a considerable contribution with her dedication and leadership. She embraced her responsibilities with her usual enthusiasm, resolution and good humour and was a hard act for me to follow. She was made a Life Vice President of the Association and continued to be a very active Trustee and member of Council until only two years ago, when ill health sadly prevented her attending meetings.

All of us here today will have our own particular memories of Brigadier Shirley. She lived life to the full and touched so many lives along the way. She was a trailblazer, a Tour de Force, an inspirational female Role Model who was never afraid to push the boundaries. AND how she would have loved today surrounded by her family, friends, army colleagues and neighbours ... with a party to follow!

Her significant contribution to the WRAC, and to the opportunities women continue to enjoy in today's Army, will be her lasting legacy. She will be remembered with the greatest of respect and affection.

Brigadier Shirley ... we salute you!

Lt Col (Rtd) Sue Westlake



I am writing to let you know that my Mum Irene Cook passed away at the age of 92 years on the 3rd December 2018.

Mum enlisted into the ATS in 1944 and served as a Payroll Clerk, with postings in London and Ilfracombe in Devon. She met my Dad in London, who was in the Royal Navy, and within 6 weeks they were married; a marriage which lasted for 66 years until my Dad died in October 2013. In 1960 they started a business in the coal trade which grew to be one of the largest independent Coal Merchants in the North East of Scotland.

Mum loved life and was definitely not ready to go. She will be missed by all her family.

I have attached a photograph of when she was in the ATS.

*Tricia Wright
(daughter)*

Christine S Gowers (nee Horner) 2012



Former W/454209 Lance Corporal Christine Susan Gowers (nee Horner), passed away peacefully at Christies Hospital Manchester, following complication in her treatment of T Cell Lymphoma, on Thursday 18th October 2012, aged 58 years. Christine was Cremated at Stockport Crematorium.

Christine joined the Army and did her initial training at Guildford in July 1974 and went on to train at Royal Military Police at Roussillon Barracks, from where she was posted to 160 Pro Coy RMP at Aldershot at the end of that year. Christine met and married Lance Corporal Martyn Gowers RMP the following year, and subsequently left the Army.

Christine left a widower, Martyn and her children, Samantha and Michael and a Granddaughter, Erin. A much-loved and respected lady missed by all that knew and met her.

**Martha Tasker Watson
(nee Mattie Bruce)
559 ACK ACK Battery HMS Ganges
18th November 1923 –
24th January 2018**



I regret to inform you that my mother Martha Watson (nee Mattie Bruce) passed away at home 24th January 2019. (Her funeral was held on 8th February 2019 in Kirkcaldy. Despite her being 95 and of failing health her death was quite unexpected and came as a shock to us all. She was a very proud supporter of all the Associations, attending reunions both in England and Scotland as her health would allow. She contributed regularly by writing articles that were published in your magazines. She was especially close to the HMS Ganges Association

Last year, whilst recovering after a fall in hospital, she noticed in an edition of the Lioness that you had used an extract of one of her previous letters as an example to encourage others to write to you to provide a record of their service into be published in time for the Centenary of the ATS. This I'm sure gave her another lease of life and she was soon fit enough to be discharged.

I have written an Obituary (see below) for my mother and include her photo of when "she did her bit", of which our family is extremely proud.

Martha Tasker Watson was born at Tigharry North Uist, the eldest of three children Mary and Archie. Her parents were Robert Aikman Gray Tasker Bruce and Catherine Annie Macleod. Her early childhood was spent in Kilmany, Fife, where she went to school both there and in Rathillet. She remembers walking to school and sometimes with her pals taking the sugar beets from the fields to eat on their way.

She finished her schooling at Bell Baxter in Cupar and left school to become a Nanny, also working in the local Post Office

at Kilmany. Although she contracted rheumatic fever as a child and spent many periods in convalescence she decided to join up when World War II broke out.

Martha joined the ATS (1942) and although initially disappointed that she would not see service out of Scotland, swapped places with a colleague who wanted to stay in Scotland thus ensuring she saw more of the world. After initial training at Inverness, then Oswestry, Anglesey (Wales) and Wolverhampton, in 1943 she was selected as a Predictor Operator serving with 559 (Ack Ack Battery HMS Ganges) at Shotley near Harwich and Ipswich which was part of the defence of London until the end of the war.

Her role saw her stationed in the gun emplacement alongside the 3.7" Howitzers, predicting the height and range of incoming enemy aircraft as they bombed London and the surrounding area. In later years she would tell me that she would still get the "collywobbles" if it was a clear moonlit night when looking out the back door. She would say it was a "bombers moon" and expect to hear the sound of aircraft overhead and see searchlights illuminating the sky.

Although her service to the country left her with a permanent hearing problem, which was a continual source of frustration to her for the rest of her life, this was compensated for by the stories she used to tell of the exploits that the "gunners" got up to during the war. Both the sinking of HMS Hood and D-Day were memories of particular moments of sadness due to the loss of so many but there was the fun times too when she and her service pals had to shake all the caterpillars out of the vegetables in advance of a visit from the Princess Royal (Mary) to the base. She had an abiding loathing of caterpillars from that day on!

After the war she returned to Fife and resumed her career as a Nanny often working with the same families with her sister Mary. It was during these times that she met the man she eventually married - Tom Watson. Tom was one of six of a family who lived at Manorlees outside Kirkcaldy. Tom had served with 250 Squadron (Desert Air Force) as a MT Driver/Mechanic in the Western Desert in WW2 from Palestine, North Africa, Malta, Sicily and Italy. They married in Cupar in 1950. Martha continued to suffer from ill health and sadly her first child, a daughter was stillborn. Her only son Robert was born in 1954 at the Simpson Memorial Pavilion in Edinburgh.

Tom and Martha continued to live in Kirkcaldy, with Tom returning to work at Hutchison's Maltings after his war service, eventually rising to Maltings Manager before his untimely death at the age of 60 in 1976.

She was delighted when her grandsons appeared on the scene and threw herself into the role of doting Granny or "Scotty Granny" as she was fondly known by the boys to differentiate from their English Granny. Knitting needles were never far away, beautiful garments, especially fine shawls were created to "keep them cosy". This gave her a new lease of life and she was always very much part of their formative years in both England and latterly Scotland when the family returned North when Robert received the call to look after Strathmore Mineral Water after a career in Brewing.

Martha returned to the guns in 2010 after seeing a local TV presenter making a mess of firing the One o'clock gun in Edinburgh. After firing off a letter basically stating "in our day we did it like this" she received a command, "from one Gunner to another", from a Lieutenant Colonel inviting her over to show them how it should be done.

Those of you who knew Martha would know that she was a defender of a cause especially if there were any injustice or if people had their facts plainly wrong. Letters to the Courier or the Fife Free Press would surely follow, and all would get published.

She loved welcoming visitors and much tea was consumed and stories told. She always doted on the neighbourhood children and was known as "Aunty" to goodness knows how many people and their eventual children. It was whilst her sister Mary was Nanny to the McNab of McNab family that she developed a great love for Dachshunds as one had been given to Robert. It is many years since a Dachshund lived at Cawdor Crescent, but there is not a flat surface in the house that does not have either a porcelain Daxie or some sort of picture present.

Martha always had a keen interest in politics, and this was again another source of "letters to the editor" if things weren't correct. Recent events in UK and World politics probably kept her going during the last two years as she was keen to see how events would turn out.

She also had a keen interest in sport, especially Motor Sport having known Jim Clark as a boy, she was always a supporter of Lewis Hamilton but her real interest was in Motorcycle Racing. Tom, who had raced against the likes of Bob McIntyre at the Beveridge Park on his AJS and Norton, and she both followed the racing. In her later years Valentino Rossi was her favourite and she enjoyed her last ride on the back of a bike in her 70's on her son's 500cc Suzuki.

She kept her humour to the end despite deafness and failing sight and I know that she would want special mention to be made to all her neighbours who visited on a regular basis, Sadiq and Mombarat and their family who seemed to know exactly what she needed in terms of food and items. Her close friends' delivery of prepared meals by Rae and newspapers by Bette who did the shopping and Anne and Don, next door, who kept a close eye on her welfare meant a lot to her. She thought the world of the Linked Living and Fife Care Watch Teams that visited her and kept them entertained with her stories.

To those of you who are here to-day: Robert, Anne, Chris and Pete are indebted to you for enabling her to live and end her life the way she wanted to – at home surrounded by her treasured photographs and precious memories.

An honest woman lies here at rest,
The friend of man, the friend of truth;
The friend of age and guide of youth,
Few hearts like hers, with virtue warm'd,
Few heads with knowledge so inform'd:
If there's another world, she lives in bliss:
If there is none, she made the best of this.
Robert Burns (Adapted)

Robert T Watson

Joyce Margaret Humphreys 3rd August 2019



A short synopsis of Joyce Humphreys written in her own words and taken from the family memoirs book. Joyce passed away 3 August 2019.

"On the 12th June 1942 I signed on and went to Northampton for my basic training. Six weeks of square bashing and all the other horrors associated with being a new recruit. From there I was posted to Arborfield near Aldershot where I learnt about Heavy Anti-Aircraft instruments. I was instructed on the predictor, height finder and the telescope identification (T.I.) together with Aircraft recognition, which was probably the most important thing I learnt. I was ready to face the enemy and, along with several other girls, I joined 566 (M) HAA Bty R A on a gunsite at Heaton Park Manchester. Day and night duties I searched the sky for enemy aircraft in my new role as a spotter and it would be wrong to think that life on an AA site was inactive, far from it, some gunsites fired several hundred rounds at German planes during a single night engagement.

In October 1943 the Regiment moved south and took over gun positions around the City of Rochester. 'C' Troop of 566 Battery was located in an old fortification built by Henry VIII to withstand a possible invasion by European Catholics. It was known as Fort Borstal and the guns were mounted to one side of the ramparts with the command post on the other side. The men's billets were housed in the lower levels and the ammunition was stored in the dungeons below the battlements. The ATS quarters were outside the fort and we had to march across the drawbridge several times a day. The very first camp for British Army detainees was built alongside Fort Borstal and I remember our chaps competing with the inmates in football matches and the like.

On June 6th 1944 the Allies moved across the English Channel at the start of the long awaited invasion of Europe. A few days later, on 13th June, the Germans' V1 weapon began flying across mostly heading for London. They flew fairly low, about 2000ft, and quite fast for those days at between 300 and 450 mph. Air raid alerts were almost continuous and it meant that we didn't get a lot of sleep. A few days after the first Doodlebug arrived we girls were moved into the fort. Some of the flying bombs were falling short of their targets and we needed protection. Our beds were set up in the empty dungeons beside the unit's ammunition. Some protection?

A defensive screen of Barrage Balloons and AA Guns were hastily repositioned along the coast. Our site was not permitted to fire at flying bombs when they passed overhead for fear of bringing them down on Rochester or the surrounding area.

The Regiment moved again in December 1944, this time to Widnes near Liverpool to protect the Docks. I was only there a few months before the unit was disbanded and I was posted to the Pay Corps in Leicester. My life changed from being in the open-air to pen pushing indoors - I didn't like it at all and missed my ATS buddies.

I received wonderful news on May 9th 1945 that Jim, my fiancée, had arrived home from India and had 6 weeks leave. I managed to get a seven day pass straight away and we started to plan our wedding. We were married on 12th June 1945 at the church of St James in Muswell Hill, London".

Joyce was married for 66 happy years and raised 3 children. At the time of her death she had 5 grandchildren, 8 great grandchildren, 4 great, great grandchildren and her memory lives on within them all.

Angie (Bristol branch)

Barbara Thorpe (W/394925 WO II (SSM)) 1938 - 31st October 2019



Babs served with the WRAC from 1956-1983. She spent time in the U.K./BAOR and Hong Kong. According to Babs, the highlight of her career in the WRAC was being attached to the Intelligence Corps in Berlin!

Returning to 'civvy' street, her career changed as she took a job with the AA & then with a Funeral Director.

Babs eventually returned to her home town of Doncaster, where she settled into retirement, loving her gardening & holidays. Her favourite holiday being lucky enough to fly on Concorde!

Her funeral in Nov 2019 was attended by her family and friends, and a small uniformed contingent of the local WRACA. She will be missed by her family & friends.

*Jenny Jackson (W/437456)
Friend*

Lynn Ashby – "Ash" March 2019



As a newly commissioned officer in 1980 I arrived at 17 Training Regiment Royal Artillery at Woolwich as 2IC of the WRAC Battery. We were responsible for all the members of the Battery, which included 56 Squadron RCT, and where I first met the then LCpl Ashby. Over the next 35 years "Ash" and I remained friends, and throughout successful careers in the Army and in "civvie street" "Ash" remained the same wonderful, fun loving, funny, loyal, generous, caring, kind, smart, hard-working, hard playing, joy filled and authentic person who touched the lives of many members of our Corps.

Ash joined the Army in the late 70s, and on her first posting at Woolwich she immediately showed her great personality, her professionalism, her leadership and her natural ability to develop people and, at the same time, protect them while they learned their craft. She was rewarded with promotion during her first tour. Ash was also an absolutely amazing athlete. She was brilliant at all sports and she, along with our PTI Lesley Davison, put the very small unit at Woolwich on the sporting map in London District. Her skill, speed and determination made her brilliant at netball, volleyball and athletics, where she became the Army Women's javelin champion. She was also a fabulous hockey player, a game which she played and loved all her life. Her all-round talent in every sport ensured that the previously unheard-of team from Woolwich became the "Woolwich Winnits" as we won most of the sports competitions across London District. The winnits cultivated their own salute; she and I raised it every time we met. This ability and love of sport prevailed throughout her time in the Army and her work ethic, selflessness and skill were a hallmark of her performance throughout her Army career.

Ash was a natural leader which meant that a posting, and another promotion, to the WRAC Training Centre beckoned and she became responsible for training young recruits as they started their careers in the Army. She made great friends while she was at the Centre, including the incomparable Glynn Cardy, Jan Ford, Dawn McClean, Val Renouf, Tracy Dodd and Heather Bradbury to name but a few. Her sense of fun, her energy, skills and enthusiasm made Ash a brilliant NCO who provided a role model to a whole generation of young women who joined the Corps. Many of those recruits paid tribute to her after she passed away

saying that she had been such a positive influence that they had completed 22 years in the Army. That is some legacy.

After Guildford, Ash and I served together again in Aldershot at 10 Company WRAC and once more she had been promoted. She was our admin sergeant and was pivotal in developing young officers namely Ali Brown (our illustrious VP), Tracey Bowers (now a MOD War Detective) and Penny Dickens, and exerting significant influence in 3 Squadron 10 Signal Regiment over BJ Taylor. This involved making sure they discharged all their duties on time and very efficiently and if they did not, making sure they avoided extras!

She was also responsible for helping organise our military training. On the recce to Okehampton with Ali and Tracey we stayed in a really dodgy pub called the Plume of Feathers. It was here Ash introduced these two young officers to a new and very pleasing drink, the "white cow" made up of Baileys, Vodka and Cointreau. This development opportunity was embraced by both young officers but one of them coped rather better than the other. Ali Brown looked a bit green around the gills at the very mention of this drink at Ash's celebration, so you can guess who did not enjoy the experience. Ash could never understand why!

It was during this posting that Ash met a cheeky little youngster called Terry May, who was the most remarkable partner to Ash and who, over the last 35 years, has made sure they have done more together than most couples do in a "complete lifetime". That meeting meant that the Army's loss was "civvie street's" gain as they both left to enjoy an extraordinarily happy life together. In her 9 years in the Army, Ash proved to be a fantastic soldier who made lifelong friends, trained and developed many young officers and soldiers and also met the love of her life, Terry.

Ash died far too soon but her leadership, her determination, her kindness, her loyalty, her fantastic sense of humour, her courage, bravery and generosity of spirit shone through all she did in the Army, in her all too short life and during her illness. There was standing room only at the celebration of her life in April 2019 having passed during the weekend of the "WRAC Grand Reunion" that took place in Southampton in March.

I was proud, as were many others, to call her my friend. She was truly a Lioness - Gentle in Manner, Resolute in Deed.

Nicky Murdoch MBE

Joan Irene Babbage (ATS) JAN 1921 - JAN 2020



Joan died on New Year's Day, a few days short of her 99th birthday. She was an only child, never married or had children; a boyfriend had been killed while on duty overseas.

Joan joined the ATS and, among other duties, she served in France and Belgium during WW2. She was awarded 3 medals - France and Germany Star, Defence Medal and Service Medal. Joan was very proud of her service.

After the end of WW2, Joan left the ATS and took a position as office manager in a printers and stationers where she continued to work long after retirement age was reached. Joan lived in the house she had been born in right up until 18 months ago, when she decided she needed a little more help and moved into a retirement home. She continued to live happily sharing her love for animals, especially dogs and donkeys, also her love for nature and music. Joan had learned to play the mandolin as a youngster when the piano that she wanted was not obtainable. One of her favourite films was the Sound of Music.

Over 60 veterans attended her funeral from all services. The service was a dignified celebration of Joan's life, including Edelweiss and music from the Sound of Music, along with All Things Bright and Beautiful, which the congregation sang with impressive enthusiasm. The Lord's Prayer was said and the Last post played.

Joan had a dignified and fitting send off, and we were all proud to have been there. Stand down Joan and rest peacefully, your duty's done. And we all thank you.

Pauline Marr

Anne Robson 20th January 2020



***Photo credit: Murdo Macleod and
Chartered Society of Physiotherapy***

Anne Robson: still mobilising the troops at 107
Scotland's oldest woman, she trained as a physiotherapist in the profession's early days, became a physical education pioneer for the war effort and is still rallying herself and others to keep fit.

Gladys Anne Logan McWatt was born on September 14th 1911, in the Borders town of Duns. As a youth she helped her GP father on his rounds, then trained as a physiotherapist and physical education teacher at Bedford Physical Education College, qualifying in 1933. She was listed in the UK Physiotherapist and Masseuse Register 1895-1980. She began offering exercise therapy locally, "There was nobody doing it in

my area, so I would help people to get back on their feet. There was practically no treatment using electrical equipment then, it was all hand massage and exercise", she recalls. She then did stints at St Thomas' Hospital, London, and Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, gaining more qualifications.

During the Second World War, Mrs Robson's love of sport took her into physical education when she joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS), the women's branch of the British Army. She became training sergeant at Dunblane Physical Training School in 1942 and rose quickly through the ranks to become a senior commander of the War Office at Aldershot, where she was in charge of the physical fitness of all the women in the ATS. "It was a huge job that involved coordinating teams in Scotland, England and Germany," she says. "Many of the women were working in unhealthy conditions in underground offices and never saw light of day, so getting them out in the fresh air and doing exercise such as archery, athletics and games was really important to keeping them fit and healthy," she says.

After the war, she went into teaching and, in 1953, married primary school headmaster Jack Robson. She is now a resident at Strachan House care home in Edinburgh, run by Barchester Healthcare, where she has become 'the best recruit' for the CSP's 'Love activity, Hate exercise?' campaign, according to physiotherapists Ethel Sinclair and Kate Tulloch. They contacted Frontline to say that Mrs Robson put younger residents to shame with her commitment to staying active, despite hearing and sight impairment. "She loves the parallel bars – she can really swing her hips! Everyone is in awe of her age and mobility," said Mrs Tulloch.

*Author: Louise Hunt (Chartered Society of Physiotherapy)
Frontline, 21st November 2018*

Scotland's oldest World War II heroine dies aged 108



A Scots World War II heroine who volunteered to serve her country has passed away, aged 108. Anne Robson was thought to be the oldest surviving female veteran from the era in the UK.

Anne - who was born Gladys Anne Logan MacWatt in Duns, Berwickshire on September 14, 1911, sadly passed away in a care home near Edinburgh.

She witnessed the suffragette movement, over 20 prime ministers, four monarchs, two world wars, the first space launch and the advent of rapidly advancing technology.

She volunteered for the Auxiliary Territorial Service - the women's branch of the British Army - at the height of the war, forsaking her physiotherapy and teaching career for the duration. After hearing that a women's section of the army was being formed, she decided that there was no better way to get involved. She joined the ATS in 1942.

Initially she served as a PTI (Physical Training Instructor) and then went on to complete her service in the rank of Senior Commander (Major) as Assistant Inspector ATS Physical Training. Anne stayed in the Army until the end of WW2. She is said to have remembered VE-Day very fondly, and "had a naughty twinkle in her eye" when recalling the celebrations. She remained in service for another two years after the war ended when she became a senior lecturer at the Avery Hill College of Education in London.

She then married primary school headmaster, Jack Robson, in 1953, and the happy couple moved to Newcastle where Anne took up the position of deputy head at the Longhenton Secondary Modern School. Jack passed away in 1972.

Following his death Anne moved back north of the border to St Andrews. In later years as, the oldest resident of the care home, Anne used to take to the stage at Christmas and give a speech over dinner.

Many described Anne as reserved and a very "gentle woman" and "fiercely independent," perhaps shown in the fact that she was driving up until the age of 90. Her "naughty sense of humour" would often have people laughing, friends said, and she was regularly visited in her care home due to this love for laughter. Anne died at Strachan House Care Home, near Edinburgh.

Anne's passing was announced by the Women's Royal Army Corps Association - the organisation which provides help and support to the thousands of brave women who have served their country in the forces.

(Courtesy of msn.com news)



A Past Photo Of Anne When 105



Sep 14, 2016

Today we wish a Happy Birthday to our oldest WRAC Association member, Anne Robson (nee MacWatt), who is celebrating her 105th birthday. Anne served in the ATS from 1942 to 1947. Initially she was a PTI and went on to complete her service in the rank of Senior Commander (Major) as Assistant Inspector ATS Physical Training.

Joyce (Emily Lilian) Harris, nee STONE 28th November 1935 - 4th January 2020



Mum was born in Brighton in 1934, the third child and first daughter of James and Alice Stone. Two other sisters followed in the next seven years. She was named Joyce after her maternal grandmother and was given the middle names Emily and Lilian in a futile effort to appease two hostile aunts on her father's side.

Perhaps not surprisingly, she never used her middle names. To all, except officialdom, she was just Joyce.

Mum's childhood was not an easy one. Her father was periodically unemployed during the depression of the 1930s and money was short in the household, and probably tempers too. Matters did not improve when James Stone left his family in the early 1940s, subsequently divorcing his wife. Mum never saw him again after her early teenage years. Alice Stone found it difficult to bring up five children single-handed, and as the eldest daughter Mum felt her mother's anger was often directed at her. The result of this was to give Mum a deep-seated opposition to injustice and a critical attitude to authority.

Mum worked as a shop assistant on leaving school until she joined the WRAC in April 1953, aged 18, to escape her unhappy childhood, for a three-year engagement. She obtained a third-class Army Certificate of Education in August 1953 and became a clerk with 27 Ind Coy WRAC the same month. The army was the making of her, because it gave her three things:

- First, a sense of belonging, having potential, and her worth as a human being, that she had hardly felt at home in Brighton. Because others had confidence in her, she developed confidence in herself. So, in her lifetime she learnt French, Spanish, and to drive; she took courses on IT and food hygiene; and she read a lot.
- Second, a love of travel. Mum's army service took her to Egypt and Cyprus in the dangerous days of the 1950s. In later years, long after leaving the army, she would travel to Scotland, Austria (for the Passion Play at Oberammergau), Iceland, Israel, Norway, and New Zealand. She visited Christchurch just weeks before the 2011 earthquake.
- Third, the army gave Mum her marriage. While in the army she met an industrial chemist turned reluctant national serviceman named Brian Harris, serving his two years in the Royal Signals. Where did they meet? Not at that most romantic of places, Catterick Garrison, but in a signals unit at Stanmore in Middlesex. We don't know whether this happened before Mum was sent to the Mediterranean in 1955 or after her return in early 1956, but by the summer of 1956 they were engaged. They left the army in due course and were married at St Hilda's Church in Crofton Park, south London, in August 1957. It's clear from Dad's letters to Mum in summer 1956 that he was deeply in love with her; and she responded in kind. She had not known such warmth and affection in Brighton, once saying that it wasn't until she married that she knew what real family life was like. It was a happy marriage, sadly cut short too soon at 27 years when Dad died in January 1985.

On leaving the army Mum went to work as a typist in the civil service, first at the Treasury and then at the Atomic Energy Authority. She and Dad moved out of south London to Strood in Kent, close enough for Dad to be able to commute to work, and right behind a primary school, in case they had children, which duly followed. Mum and Dad made that house a loving, stable and encouraging home for us to grow up in with our various pets – despite Mum's professed dislike of furry creatures.

Opposites attract, it is said, and this seems to be true of Mum and Dad's marriage. Mum was very often the active one and Dad just went with the flow. Dad, for instance, wasn't much of a one for holidays, and it was Mum who made the arrangements and effectively presented him with a fait accompli.

In 1982 the Harris family came to Nottinghamshire when Dad's

job was relocated out of London. Guidance was given which indicated Chilwell as a desirable and convenient area to live in. Mum found this move to the East Midlands difficult to handle, but began putting down roots by joining a walking group and becoming a regular at St Barnabas Church, Inham Nook. The St Barnabas community enabled her to meet people in this strange place we had moved to. Walking in Derbyshire, however, became an increasingly large part of Mum's life.

In the early 2000s Mum was able to downsize to a flat in Grove Court. Here too she threw herself into being part of the community. She lived an active life and had little time for those who would complain about things while doing nothing to change them. True to the motto of the WRAC, in which she had served, Mum was 'gentle in manner, resolute in deed'. So, she took on part of the garden and twice won a prize for her garden work; she organised the children's toy collection for the Salvation Army; managed the kitchen kitty; and a number of other events for the residents of Grove Court. She continued to walk with rambling groups, both as a means of keeping fit and for the sheer joy of it, even when she was only able to manage short distances along roads.

Mum died on 4 January 2020 aged 85. She is survived by her children, Mark and Andrea, and by her grandson James. Her body will be cremated and, as was her wish, her ashes will be scattered in Derbyshire

Mark Harris and Andrea (son and daughter)

PEGGY SORLEY **29th May 1926 – 29th September 2019**



We were very sorry when Peggy passed away. She had been in a care home but had been considerably well for some time. Her sister Jean Houghton was a very regular visitor to her.

Peggy was a good contributor to the branch over many years, rarely missing a meeting, any bus trips or meals out. She was also a great reader of books and etc – it was a treat to phone her, as a good conversation ensued, with many topics discussed in full! Forget your telephone bill!!! I can see Peg now enjoying sandwiches etc at the Buckingham Palace Tea Party just three years ago.

The verse on the back of her Funeral Order, by Joyce Grenfell, was very descriptive and appropriate for Peggy.

Farewell Peg

Jean Doe

WRAC Southampton Branch

LAST POST

BABBAGE, Miss Joan of Torquay on 1st January 2020 (ATS)

CARNEY (nee Savage), Mrs Betty of Sutton Coldfield on 20th December 2017 (ATS)

EASTHAM (nee Firth), Mrs K M of Eastbourne in 2019 (ATS)

GIBSON, Miss Eleanor of Liverpool in late 2019 (ATS)

GUIVER, Mrs Kay of Weymouth on 9th October 2019 (ATS)

HAMMOND (nee Penney), Mrs Florence of London on 8th November 2019 (ATS)

MURPHY, Miss Jacqui of Wigan on 14th April 2019 (WRAC)

PLOVER, Mrs Millie of Alsager, Cheshire on 2nd December 2019 (ATS)

POWELL-PRICE, Mrs Teresa of Ashburton, Devon on 25th September 2019 (ATS & WRAC)

STEEL(nee Wormald), Mrs Florence of Nottingham on 26th October 2019 (ATS)

STONE, Mrs Joyce on 4th January 2020 (WRAC)

TREMARCO, Mrs Edith, of Hartlepool on 18 December 2019 (ATS)

TUCKER (nee Oates), Mrs Elizabeth (Betty) of Bournemouth on 20th September 2019 (ATS)

UNDERWOOD, Miss Audrey Mary of Reading on 10 January 2020 (ATS)

VAUGHAN-MORGAN, Miss Isobel of Wokingham on 2nd June 2017 (WRAC)

WELHAM (nee Pavey), Mrs Barbara of Colchester on 18th August 2019 (ATS)

WHITE, Miss Doris, of Leicester, on 17th January 2020





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 2019 kind donations were made by individuals and Branches in memory of the following personnel:

Brig (Retd) Dame Joan Evelyn Clara
Kelleher DBE RIP

Joan Florence Butler RIP

Joan Elizabeth Pearce RIP

Elizabeth Bustard RIP

Catherine Jane Cox RIP

Edith Margaret McElwaine RIP

Lt. Col (Retd) Anne Bray RIP

Dorothy Mary McCuan RIP

John Lawrence Smith RIP

Maj (Retd) Kath Hughes RIP

Irene Hartfree RIP

LEGACIES

During Financial Year 2019 the Association very much appreciated the legacies received from the following, which varied from £500 to £589,088, every penny of which will ensure the continued work of the Association :

Col (Retd) Eleanor Bowles

Phyllis Brisk RIP

Audrey Everett RIP

Col (Retd) Betty Margaret Metcalfe RIP

Col (Retd) Frances Cook

Shirley Knight RIP

Eileen Illingworth RIP

Col (Retd) Hazel Powell RIP

Margaret Eileen Catherine Horsham RIP

Col (Retd) Vere Irene Fisher RIP

WRAC Association, Unit 11, Basepoint Business Centre, 1 Winnall Valley Road, Winchester, SO23 0LD
Tel: 0300 400 1992 (local rate call, including mobiles) Email: office.manager@wracassociation.org.uk
Benevolence: benfund@wracassociation.org.uk Lioness: editor@wracassociation.org.uk
Website: www.wracassociation.org.uk



SUMMER EVENT

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FORM:

I am interested in attending a Summer Event, to be held in London, Summer of 2020.

I understand the Event will include tours and lunch.

Surname: First Name (known as):

Email:

Tel No:

Address:

..... Post Code:

Please do NOT include any money with this form – we will advise you of cost in due course.

Return to: WRAC Association, Unit 11, Basepoint, 1 Winnall Valley Road, Winchester, SO23 0LD
by 17th March 2020, or email to office.manager@wracassociation.org.uk

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WRAC STATUETTE

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FORM

The WRAC Lady statue sculptor has offered to make a quantity of statuettes, to the same design.

If you are interested in purchasing one please complete this form and return to HQ Office.

Surname: First Name (known as):

Email:

Tel No:

Address:

..... Post Code:

Please do NOT include any money with this form – we will advise you of final cost in due course.

Return to: WRAC Association, Unit 11, Basepoint, 1 Winnall Valley Road, Winchester, SO23 0LD by 30th March 2020, 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: