

LIONESS

SUPPORTING WOMEN WHO SERVED



IN THIS EDITION

EVENTS

GRAND REUNION &

MANCHESTER 10K

GREAT YARMOUTH ATS
PLAQUE

WRAC DISBANDMENT:
30TH ANNIVERSARY

WRAC WELFARE ASSISTANTS

IN MY DAY



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



A jubilee year and a Grand Reunion year – the WRAC Association has certainly had much to be proud of since the last edition of the Lioness, and what a Grand Reunion it was. The chance to sit and chat with members from across the UK was a real joy for me and helps to ensure that as trustees we stay focussed on the needs of our members. From the honour of taking the salute at Beating Retreat to the pleasure of listening to our guest Brigadier Lizzie Faithfull-Davies speak, it was a long weekend comprising many happy moments. Lizzie's mother Carrie, a veteran of the WRAC, accompanied her daughter, and joined a dinner table of her contemporaries to discover several people who had served with her sister – a reminder of what a small world of true comradeship we live in. I would like to express a particular thank you to the Membership Council and volunteers who worked so hard to make the Grand Reunion such a success and hope to catch up with many more members at upcoming events.

With our patron, Her Majesty the Queen, marking her Platinum Jubilee it has been wonderful to hear how branches across the country have celebrated. We never forget that Princess Elizabeth served as one of our number before ascending the throne and we are rightfully proud to call her one of our own. I have been privileged to meet a number of ATS ladies, at the re-dedication in Great Yarmouth of the plaque to the 26 members of the ATS who died in a bombing in 1943, and when visiting Leicester and Nottingham Branch for their Jubilee lunch. I was also honoured to attend Founders Day at the Royal Hospital Chelsea and see our pensioners take such pride on parade.

Away from the events, work has continued to increase the focus on issues affecting female veterans, and in my role on the Executive Committee of the Cobseo Female Veterans Cluster Group significant progress has been made engaging groups and individuals who can further our cause. From health to housing, care to criminal justice, we are pressing on some of the big issues which continue to affect women who served. From time to time, we will reach out to our members to help gather data and personal testimonies, and we hope you will continue to support us as we endeavour to better outcomes for female veterans.

One organisation we engage with is Fighting With Pride, the charity which has worked to secure an Independent Review of the pre-2000 ban on homosexuality in the Armed Forces and the impact on those affected. On page 73 of this issue, you will see that I am writing to invite members to participate in the Government's Call for Evidence. Testimony is requested from those directly affected as well as families and witnesses. I hope our members will feel able to contribute to this important piece of work.

In our July trustees meeting we bid a fond farewell to one of our hardest working officers. Barbara Davies has been our treasurer for 5 years, plotting a strong financial course, ensuring effective financial governance and taking care that every penny spent has a meaningful purpose which benefits women who served in the ATS and WRAC. It has been a joy to work alongside Barbara who, as an active branch member, brings so much more to every board meeting. If Tim Savage, who now takes over as Treasurer, is half the woman Barbara is, I know we remain in good hands!

As you enjoy the rest of this packed edition of the Lioness, I hope that you will find events to attend and consider new ways you can engage with and support your Association and fellow servicewomen. If you've never reached out before, now is as good a time as any, so whether you want to attend a local get-together, match with a buddy for over-the-phone comradeship, or even raise your hand to volunteer for the Association in an official capacity, please do get in touch with the Lioness team. I look forward to seeing you soon.

Fiona Gardner

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Front cover:

Grand Reunion 2022

Photos © Paul Nicholson

Back Cover:

Manchester 10k

EDITORIAL



Welcome to this, another, bumper edition – reflecting all the things so many of you have been taking part in. Whether that was this year's Grand Reunion, in March – AGM Minutes and Statement of Accounts are included; the ATS plaque dedication in Great Yarmouth, the fun- and fund-raising Manchester 10k run/walk; the Not Forgotten Association summer events; and/or your own branch/group events. It is obvious that everyone has enjoyed the opportunity of being able to meet and mix once again, post covid, no matter how careful we still have to be.

Within these pages you will find lots and lots of photos. However, can I remind you again to please make these as good a quality as possible. Please make use of the camera on your smartphone, if you have one. Go into 'settings' to ensure you have it set to take the highest quality. This makes life easier for us when reproducing them. Also, again, please do not embed photos into articles or reports; please attach them separately to your email – again it makes their reproduction so much easier and the quality so much better.

There is quite a packed summer of events, particularly at branch level. November will see you all gather at locations across the country (and globe) for Remembrancetide. We are still waiting on final instructions from the RBL regarding the Westminster Abbey Field of Remembrance and Cenotaph parade.

We have a very good number already registered to attend this year's Remembrance at Guildford – this takes place in the city centre, at the 'Borough Church' (where space is limited), not at the Cathedral, and then at the war memorial. Guildford is your 'home city' (and Cathedral). The Borough are

always very welcoming, and pleased to see us present and marching, especially as we have the Freedom of the Borough. If you are unable to attend Guildford this year please do consider it another year.

Wonderful memories have been shared, once again – if they trigger your own please do share them with us and everyone else.

We continue to honour all those who have joined the Parade Square in the sky – whether with a Last Post mention or with memories in the Obituaries.

All this is mixed in with the usual Association News and Updates, including how to apply to purchase Association memorabilia and more. We love receiving your news, updates, memories and requests for 'where are you now', etc. Please send your entries in by 1st November for the next edition and remember:

We are constantly trying to make the Lioness the best it can be and to reflect your news, views and interests. If you have any ideas or suggestions please do let us know - hopefully you helping us will enable us to help and 'support' you.

Continue to stay safe and well, and we look forward to seeing you all sometime soon.

Penny Muxworthy
editor@wraca.org.uk

SUPPORTING WOMEN WHO SERVED

Photographs:

Please send in good quality photographs. Limit them to the best (in quality and quantity) – ideally 3 – 4.

Please 'attach' photographs to emails / articles, Please do not embed them within a word (or other) document – it makes it really difficult to copy and share them to the magazine.

Please title photographs, as least with those in it. You know who they are – myself and others may not.

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

Association Vision Statement

To provide camaraderie, benevolence and mutual support to former members of the ATS and WRAC and exert influence within the military charity sector to broaden support for female veterans.

In addition, we welcome to the Association Servicewomen, both serving and retired, of any capbadge.

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@wracaorg.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.

Chairman of the Membership Council Foreword



What a wonderful Grand Reunion we had in March; it was great to see so many members of the Association enjoying themselves in Leeds. I know covid prevented a few you from attending, for which we are sorry, and that a reasonable number contracted it at the Reunion, but I do hope that the fun you had at the Grand Reunion outweighed the (hopefully) mild symptoms!

It was wonderful to be able to have an event to rededicate the plaque to the 26 members of the ATS killed on 11 May 1943 in Great Yarmouth in May of this year. The previous marble plaque mysteriously came off the wall and we have taken the opportunity to replace it in a more accurate location, and for any of you holidaying in Norfolk please visit the plaque in the car park of the Imperial Hotel. We were well supported with members of the Association, including 2 local members who were both Centenarians – Joan Awberry and Lorna Lansdowne - and others travelled from across the country, making it a great Association event in Norfolk.

Twenty-five of our members reached that amazing milestone of 100 years old in 2021, and each one received greetings and flowers from the Association on your behalf, and they all now receive a special birthday card that is a view of the ATS and WRAC Statues in our plot at the NMA. This year I have already sent out 8 cards and look forward to sending out many more. If any of you are aware of any ATS (or WRAC) ladies who are approaching their 100th Birthday but are not members of the Association, please pass on their details to the Association

HQ so we can send them our congratulations. Sadly, I have attended several funerals of our ATS members who gave so much to the Association in their lifetimes – Priscilla Weldon (Benevolent Fund), Sylvia Musgrave (Bath Branch) and Molly Clarke (Salisbury) but also one of our WRAC Chelsea In-Pensioners Audrey Merton. It was an honour to represent the Association at their funerals.

I visited Birmingham Branch for their Christmas Jumper lunch and it was wonderful to meet so many members of the Association in such good spirits, although I am sure I caused upset as the Judge of the table decorations – but they were all so good! I look forward to visiting more of the branches and meeting more members whether at Branch meetings or at Association events.

I would like to thank Babs Anderson for all her hard work as the Area Coordinator for Wales and the West, she has provided a fantastic level of support to the Association as a whole, in particular all her work for the WRAC Statue at the NMA. I would like to welcome Ann Stack as the new Area Coordinator for Wales and the West and Dawn Hawker as the Area Coordinator for the newly reformed Area of the North West. I am delighted to have 2 such willing and able volunteers and look forward to them taking forward the Association in their Areas.

As Chair of the Membership Council I am always keen to recruit more of those eligible to join so that they can get the comradeship that we provide. To that end it would be very useful to have quotes from you as members as to the value of the branches or groups that you belong to. Please send your quotes to me at rowena.naile@wraca.org.uk.

Keep on enjoying the comradeship of the Association and encourage more members

Rowena Naile MBE

STOP PRESS STOP PRESS

WRAC Association success - Cobseo Executive Election Result

Cobseo, the Confederation of Service Charities, provides a single point of contact for interaction with Government, including local government and the Devolved Administrations; with the Royal Household; with the Private Sector; and, with other members of the Armed Forces community. The Executive Committee comprises 17 Cobseo member organisations who are represented by their Chief Executive.

The WRAC Association is proud to announce that we have been elected to join the Executive Committee following a vote of our peers in July, and will take our place at the board table where issues and concerns that affect the Armed Forces Community are identified and a collaborative and coherent direction to deliver solutions is agreed.

This election is the result of the work carried out over recent years to strengthen the direction and voice of the WRAC Association. Our trustees have worked tirelessly to ensure that the needs of female veterans remain prioritised and included in the provision of veteran services. Our VP Fiona Gardner and Life VP Ali Brown sit on the Executive Board of Cobseo's Female Veterans Cluster Group, and this latest appointment will build on this work and ensure that female veterans are represented at the highest level.

We are delighted to have been elected, and look forward to working closely with the Armed Forces community in the years to come.

Comings and Goings

COMING:

DAWN HAWKER – NORTH WEST AREA CO-ORDINATOR



Who am I? Where am I from, and Where do I live now?

My name is Dawn Hawker and I was born in Kent to a military family. My dad was in the Royal Corps of Transport based in Gillingham and although I was born there my many siblings were all born around various German and UK military base locations. We currently live in Carlisle, where we moved in February this year. Previous to this we lived in Manchester after leaving Germany way back in 2000.

Military Service – When, Who, Where?

I joined the WRAC in 1981 having joined at Chatham Army Recruiting office and did my training at Guildford along with everyone. I left there and ventured to Woolwich to do my trade training as a Stewardess. I had the most enjoyable time there and this is where I met my husband. I then moved to the Ladybird College in Camberley and after a very brief courtship (a year) Jeff & I married in 1982 (due to the Falklands War) and in May this year we celebrated our 40th Wedding Anniversary. Jeff was based in Germany, but we were lucky enough to get a posting together very quickly – about 9 months after our marriage – in them days that was very quick. We moved into our first home with the Queens Lancashire Regiment, and for our first wedding anniversary the Army decided to send hubby on a nice 7 month 'holiday' to Cyprus. During this time our daughter was born – “♪Alone again naturally♪”.

Civvy Street Beckoned!

Due to having our daughter I was not allowed to stay in the Army, so civvy street for me, but I was lucky enough to have travelled around with Hubby for the remainder of his career, which lasted for 37½ years. He is now retired and lives on the golf course.

Locations Around Army Life?

Our travels have taken us to Dortmund, Tern Hill, Munster, Soest, Inverness, Manchester and then back to Germany where we lived in Celle, Paderborn and Sennelager. We returned home to Manchester where we stayed until December 2021.

Working History?

I have worked within the military family for many years enjoying varied roles such as BFG Administrator and postie. I have worked in the NAAFI and also in the kindergartens along my travels. I finished in Sennelager, at the Parachute Centre, as Office Administrator/Manager, where I was lucky enough to do several parachute jumps, Tandem & Static lines, and left there with happy memories of working in a great place; and, of course, the Rhine Army Summer Show – RASS - which was held on Bad Lippespringer Airfield every year. The rehearsals were great, and the bands would use our coffee shop to come and relax sometimes.

On returning to UK?

On returning to Manchester I worked as a Legal Executive Secretary for approximately 15 years, before working at the NHS prior to our 'retiring' to Carlisle. I have recently taken up a post as Office Manager for a mental health charity, part-time, which allows me to make time for other things i.e. WRAC North West Area Co-Ordinator.

If I had not joined the WRAC?

I wanted to be a trampoline instructor as the teacher was great – in more ways than one. As I couldn't trampoline to save my life I then turned to typing and working locally. I would have stayed there, as most girls did, for many years had a conversation with my dad not made me sit up and think that there was more to life than Gillingham.

Social Enjoyment?

I enjoy theatre - musicals or any really. I love live screenings at the cinema, or attending any form of plays, whether they be current modern plays, William Shakespeare or maybe even Noel Coward, although I have seen my fair share of 'bad' plays. I love the Edinburgh Fringe – hence the bad plays. I enjoy a really nice meal out, or in, rather than a pub, although I never say no to a get together – wherever that might be. I have recently joined the Dinner Club and also attended the GR2022.

WRAC North West Area Co-Ord – So Far?

I have visited a couple of Branches / Groups and hope to visit two or three a month and then start again. I will endeavour to get round to every Branch/Group in the North West as soon as I can. If you have something special going on, please let me know and I will try to arrange a visit for this as well.

Facebook or Not? Contact Me???

Our North West Area page is there for you so please find us or send me a Friend's request and I can add you. This is 'Your Page' so you can post information of events in your area or about your Branch / Group. PM me if you want to say anything private, I am a listening ear.

If you don't do Facebook that's fine, I would love to hear from you and if you want you can send me an email northwest.area@wraca.org.uk so that I can call you. Please contact me – “no silly questions, just silly answers” as the saying goes.

ANN STACK - WALES & THE WEST AREA CO-ORDINATOR



Where are you from? Where did you grow up?

I was born in Gloucester where my parents had moved to from London. My Father was a Northerner from Cheshire and my lovely Mum hailed from The Emerald Isle. She was due to emigrate to America but at the last moment felt it was too far away so The Big Smoke it was! My family are scattered far and wide and I am the last of my siblings living here in The Shire.

Do you have a military pedigree?

My Grandfather served in the Great War and was one of the many young amputees to return. As children, we were morbidly fascinated by his spare leg in the bathroom. My Father served in The Grenadier Guards, a cousin in The Irish Guards, a young and handsome Great Uncle from Eire was killed in WW1, and his brother survived the sinking of the ship he was on after floating in open water for 3 days. An Uncle served in the Royal Signals in the 60's and was stationed in Aden at the same time as 'Mad Mitch' whom he greatly admired. Each generation on both sides of my family have served in The Armed Forces, of which I am very proud.

Had you not joined the WRAC, what might you have done?

Like a lot of young 17-year-olds, I was really unsure about what vocation I wanted to follow and I toyed with the idea of becoming a nurse or teacher which are family traditions too. Our family are born to serve!

Why did you join the Army?

I was in Lower Sixth at School and completely fed up and bored. I'd been offered a place on the Management Trainee Program at good old British Home Stores, where I had a Saturday job, and the thought of it nearly finished me off as I wanted excitement. A friend who worked alongside me showed me an A5 booklet which featured the WRAC, Trades and Postings. I trawled through the book, narrowed down the trades with the most postings overseas and two days later I was at the Recruitment Office, aged 17 years and 1 month. One of the best decisions I have ever made.

What aspect of The WRAC did you most enjoy?

That's a hard one to answer as there were so many things that I enjoyed. Marching to the beat of a Regimental Band and the pride in doing so remains with me to this day. The opportunity to take part in field exercises alongside our NATO Allies in what was West Germany (the Iron Curtain was firmly in place in the 1970's and Russia was very much a threat, like it is today) and being seconded to work with German, Dutch and Belgique lads who were doing their National Service in Rheindahlen was interesting to say the least. The camaraderie that exists amongst WRAC's is phenomenal and our understanding of each other is unique.

Would you join the Army today?

I would, and especially now that the Equality Act enables Soldiers to continue without prejudice. From my own perspective, I had to leave on 'family grounds' and was fortunate to have a very understanding OC who said I could stay as long as my uniform fitted. I hot footed it to the tailor's and served until I was five and a half months pregnant; quite something in 1980. Today's Army offers choice, which is very powerful.

What do you hope to bring to the Role of Area Coordinator?

I'm following in the footsteps of two hardworking Coordinators, Babs Anderson and Maggie Purkis, and together they deserve a huge thank you for all of the time and effort they have put into Wales and The West Area. My aim is to continue with the hard work in supporting and connecting our Branches and to ensure that no Branch feels isolated, and that their efforts are valued. Did you know that one negative word takes five positive words to recover one's equilibrium? so I am very mindful of my responses. I also want to promote Branches and The WRAC Association to as many groups and people as I am able to. My skill set since leaving the WRAC has been varied, and the vast majority has been leading in Pastoral Care and Safeguarding within schools, and this has equipped me to work with a broad range of agencies and people from all walks of life, which I know will be very helpful with my new role.

What Association Events are you looking forward to?

All Association events have their special moments and it's hard to say which one is the ONE. However, The Grand Reunion and Remembrance Day in London are very special. The icing on the cake was being part of the '100 Years of Women in The Armed Forces' at The Royal Albert Hall in 2017. It was magnificent and humbling.

Would you describe yourself as 'Gentle in Manner, Resolute in deed?' What would be your own motto if you had one?

I have moments of gentleness and moments that are a lot sturdier. I am resolute when I get my teeth into something and I like to get a job done, no matter what. My motto? 'Challenge what you see is wrong. Be kind'.

Company's coming – what are you cooking?

Chilli – not too hot, complete with dips, tortilla's, breads and a shot of tequila. It would be rude not too!

...and which 3 famous people are you inviting over?

The Dali Llama – the serenity and peace will be needed after the Tequila but, aside from that, the world needs men like him to promote peace. He exudes calm and also has a twinkle in his eye. Miriam Margoyles – clever and witty with an array of seriously naughty tales.

Hugh Jackman – he can sing; he can dance; he is a bit handsome.

What are your top 5 singles?

So many to choose from and I love all genres of music, but these spring to mind:

- Insomnia – Faithless
- Into My Arms – Nick Cave and The Bad Seeds
- Human – The Killers
- The Sound of Silence - Disturbed
- Like Sugar – Chaka Khan

Which household gadget can you not live without?

I have a love-hate relationship with all things domestic, so am happy to live without all of them!

What would people be most surprised to learn about you?

I love musical theatre and the first time I saw Chicago, I was just shy of dancing down the aisles. In another life I would love to have been a dancer, singer and actress or a writer.

Could you be entitled to a pension you're not getting?

A large number of veterans who are entitled to an Armed Forces Pension are currently not claiming, and some of those could be women who served in the WRAC.

As Veterans UK work to find eligible individuals, around £43 million has been paid out, with many more potential claimants yet to be traced.

Don't forget - your pension is not automatically paid to you, so you must get in touch with JPAC to claim it when you reach retirement age.

Good to know...

To cut down on administration stress at a time of grieving, the UK Government's Tell Us Once service means that as you register the death of a loved one in England, Scotland or Wales, relevant departments are notified including Veterans UK. This helps mitigate the possibility of paying back pension overpayments and means that dependant benefits start more quickly.

Help and Support

If you have any questions about your Armed Forces Pension, call the JPAC Enquiry Centre on 0800 085 3600

GOING:

BABS ANDERSON – WALES & THE WEST AREA CO-ORDINATOR



Thoughts on being an Area Co-ordinator

I took over as Area Chairman of Wales and the West Area in May 2017 from Maggie Purkis, and I can honestly say that I have enjoyed the challenge immensely. There have been challenges along the way, but I hope I've made a good fist of it.

Prior to taking on the Chairman's role, I had ridden shotgun to Maggie as Area Secretary. We used to joke that I was never invited anywhere as secretary - and I put it down to not knowing which fork to use. When I became Area Chairman (later Area Co-ordinator) I was invited to several Branches and joined in with whatever jolly event they were holding. Our Branches are full of fun and enthusiasm for the WRAC Association, and I'd like to thank them for their support during my tenure.

I believe it is the Area Co-ordinator's job to hold the Area together by interacting with the Branches through the Secretaries, disseminate information to the Branches and back to HQ. The Area Co-ordinator is the conduit through which little nuggets of knowledge pass.

I feel that my biggest achievement was taking part with getting the WRAC Statue installed at the National Memorial Arboretum. Like most of us who wore lovat green I had always wanted to have something of our own, where we could direct our remembrances, and pay homage to those who have gone before us to warm up the stools in the NAAFI bar in the great beyond. Having the sculptor living only 4 miles from me was very handy. My weekly, or fortnightly, visits to check on progress must have driven him mad, although he hid it well. We managed to stay on target and our lovely girl was craned into place dead on time - only to be scuppered at the last minute by Covid 19. The unveiling of the statue event was postponed with only a couple of days to go, but it was the most sensible thing to do. We held a more muted affair on 31 July 2021, which went off very well. It was quite satisfying to see how many people wanted to have their photograph taken with 'Maureen' (her working title). It was worth the hours of visiting a very cold barn to discuss the finer points of our statue's design with interested cows.

I always said that I wouldn't leave the position of Area Co-ordinator unless I had someone extra special to take over. I believe that I have found such a person in the shape of Ann Stack. I know she will be fabulous and already has the reins firmly grasped in her hands.

Babs Anderson

GET TO KNOW YOUR TRUSTEES:

Could you be a trustee?
It's not just a job for the officers,
as one of our board members
knows well



A trustee for over 5 years, Barbara Johnson brings skills to the Board of Trustees which come more from her life since serving in the WRAC. From policy and project input to supporting the recruitment and development of our permanent team, Barbara is involved in all aspects of governing our charity and hopes that other non-commissioned members will consider applying to become a trustee. The Lioness persuaded Barbara to tell us more about her career and what drew her to becoming a trustee.

I joined the WRAC as a Private soldier on 2nd April 1979 at the age of 18, choosing the trade of switchboard operator; I had been working for [the then] GPO as a directory enquiry operator so it seemed the natural choice! This was in the days before computers, when you sat at a large desk with several bookshelves to hand containing every telephone directory across the country and, once the caller had asked for a number in a particular location, you could quickly grab the right book ready to thumb through the information in seconds.

After passing out from Guildford following my basic training, I went to the Royal School of Signals in Catterick, North Yorkshire, for my trade training. Then in August 1979 took up my first posting in Rheindahlen, West Germany, with NORTHAG (Northern Army Group) Signal Troop, a detachment of 28 Signal Regiment who were based in St Tonis. The telephone exchange was in a basement, in a part of what was known as 'the Big House', so there was very limited natural light and several cockroaches (especially visiting those of us on the night shift!). I learned to drive soon after arriving and

took every opportunity to travel far and wide in my first car, an original mini cooper in mustard yellow. I earned my first stripe in 1981, which came with new responsibilities and a single bunk in the WRAC block (coming from a family of 6 children, not having to share your bedroom space was a very welcome new experience for me!).

In January 1982 I moved to Lisburn in Northern Ireland, serving with 233 signal squadron as a supervisor in the telephone exchange, before taking up a training instructor post back in Yorkshire at the School of Signals.

I became Chief Supervisor of the military telephone exchange in Bielefeld, West Germany in April 1985 as a Sergeant with 4 Squadron, 16 Signal Regiment. This was my first experience since joining up of having civilian workers in my team, as the local rules dictated a small percentage of the workforce were to be German Nationals. Although I didn't realise it at the time (as we all pretty much got on with any challenge that was thrown our way), I was learning a considerable number of new skills regarding people management, employment legislation, recruitment and development. This skill base would go on to provide the foundation of my future career outside of the Army.

In January 1987 it was time to consider my next posting and what options were available to me within the switchboard trade. The highest rank you could achieve in the trade was Staff Sergeant and this was very restricted as there were only 2 posts at that level, both of which were filled.

I had really enjoyed the training element of my previous roles and so looked into opportunities outside of the communications trades, eventually applying to become an instructor at the Royal Military Academy in Sandhurst, training female officer cadets in basic military skills such as drill and first aid (as well as how to iron a uniform and bull those shoes!). Happily, my application was successful, and I spent the final 2 years of my 10 year career as a Staff Sergeant instructor in a very beautiful and historic place. I left the WRAC on 22nd June 1989.

The resettlement programme I chose on leaving had to be Personnel Management. It was the natural next step of course and this, together with the fabulous opportunities, personal development and superb training I was very fortunate to receive during my military career, set me on the right track for my second career in Human Resources.

I am now a Chartered Fellow of the CIPD (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development) and have worked as a Human Resources Director for a variety of organisations over the last 20 years. I am self-employed these days and am very recently semi-retired, having moved to the wonderful Peak District in Derbyshire with my husband Alan.

I joined the Board of Trustees 5 years ago as I wanted to support a not-for-profit organisation, and add some value, by offering my skills and the relevant experience I had gained working in commercial environments in the private sector. As an ex-service woman I was, of course, drawn to the WRAC Association. Our meetings are always lively, and the different aspects we get involved in make volunteering as a trustee really interesting and worthwhile. I would suggest to anyone who is interested that they should find out more and chat to other trustees. I do know some people think that only officers can become a trustee but that simply isn't true, as in my case. Being able to volunteer to support the WRAC Association is very rewarding, and new members to the team would be welcomed with open arms.

If you'd like to find out more about becoming a trustee, email info@wraca.org.uk or call the office for an informal chat on 0300 400 1992.

OTHER (OFFICER) NEWS:

LIFE VICE PRESIDENT COL (RTD) ALI BROWN OBE INVESTITURE



The day finally dawned, a cold and rainy one with warnings of gale force winds, at Windsor Castle. Having travelled down to Windsor the day before, myself, Mary and my mother had spent a very comfortable night at the Castle Hotel and had made sure that all our alarm clocks had been set for very very loud. I was extremely lucky to get a date for the investiture so soon after the publication of the Queen's Birthday Honours List, given the Covid backlog of over 4,000 people. However, the restrictions still in place did mean that I could only take one guest in with me.

We got to the gates of Windsor Castle very early, no surprises there, and were met by a wall of armed police officers and were given strict instructions of where to go and park. Mary had, very kindly, agreed to drive myself and my mother, so we knew we could get pretty close to the front door. On entering the Castle we were briefed and were very pleased to hear that HRH Princess Anne was carrying out the investitures that day and, also, that my Mum would be with me throughout. We then walked through a succession of glorious rooms until we reached the Kings Drawing Room, where those people who were to receive OBEs were gathered. After a short wait and a brief on where and how to curtsy or bow, we moved into the Great Hall.

I have no idea what I said to HRH Princess Anne, but I do know I did not stop talking for a good 5 minutes. Knowing Mum was just behind me was really good as she was able to really feel part of the day. Then, another curtsy and we moved off to have the official photographs taken.

The plan was to go out into the Castle grounds to have more photos taken but, on opening the door, we quickly realised there was a gale and a monsoon taking place. The only thing we could do was to walk very fast, with our umbrellas blown inside out, to the car where Mary was patiently waiting. We then finished the perfect day with a lunch with more of my family.

My thanks must go to the Vice President, Trustees and Members of the WRAC Association. A day I will remember for ever.

Ali Brown OBE



KEEP CALM AND BE A BUDDY

**40 Women serving in the Army
today are waiting
to be Buddied up with you.**

Register now at

www.wraca.org.uk/support

or call 0330 400 1992

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.



GRAND REUNION 2022

THE WEEKEND



Info desk & Reception & Arrivals

Northern Ireland's thoughts on GR'22

Just a small report on our thoughts of The Grand Reunion, Leeds. There were 3 of us who went over to attend the Reunion - Marie Jenkins, Chrissie Tolcher, and myself, Sylvia Connachan. This was the first year we were not able to get into the venue hotel - not to worry we were in The Double Tree Hotel, which was very nice and handy to the railway station.

We enjoyed the weekend, stayed from Friday to Monday. In the day-time we went for retail therapy, and a lovely lunch in an Italian restaurant. Back to the hotel to get ready for the Friday evening festivities. The evening was great, seeing all the other ladies dressed up in their outfits, which were all looking good, and enjoying themselves, as were we. The food was lovely, we had great company at our table, and we all enjoyed it.

Saturday, I went to the Secretary's meeting, which was very informative, and I got a few ideas to bring back to our group. Then mingled around talking and hugging friends which we had not seen for a long time. Saturday evening, we were all dressed up in our finery. The band played great music and kept us well entertained. The Dinner was lovely; all had a good night.

Sunday, we went to the Church Service, then said goodbye to those friends going home. The weekend was very good; Leeds was a nice place, once I got used to the hill. The Reunions are good; we see different parts of England every time.

Marie says she has a great time going to the reunions, meeting up with old friends and new ones - great food, enjoyment all the weekend. Roll on the next one. Chrissie says "thank you for a lovely weekend - the food was excellent, the entertainment was fantastic, and accommodation was very good".

So, ladies, it was lovely to see you all again. Thank you to the Committee for all their hard work putting it all together. Looking forward to the next one.

Take care; stay safe.

Sylvia Connachan,
Chair/Secretary, WRAC Ulster Branch.

The Association organised a packed weekend, with just enough time for members to meet up, catch up, engage in the delights of Leeds and even slip in some retail therapy.

By the Registration and Shop desks there were other tables with a fundraising draw and Silent Auction to also take part in, along with tables promoting the Ben Fund and Buddy Scheme. And, of course, more Weekend Raffle tickets to be purchased – would be rude not to; if you don't buy you can't win! There was a map for us all to say where we had come from, and a suggestions/ideas/comments board for, well, suggestions, ideas and comments – on the weekend in particular and Association in general. A great idea although sometimes a bit confusing: one suggestion "more fancy dress", another suggestion "less fancy dress". Saturday there was also a dance group promoting a project they are undertaking using the creative arts for female veterans to 'tell their stories' [Editor: see article on page 80].

With our weekend information, Saturday night Drink's voucher, and map and Guide of Leeds in our hands, off we went to enjoy a cup of tea (or something stronger?) and plan what we were going to do and where we needed to be by when.



Jane Ricketts, Betty Cash and Chester branch in canal boat



FRIDAY: Dinner

No prizes, but amazing fancy dress outfits demonstrating great creativity, ingenuity and fun. Well done everyone.



SILENT AUCTION



HQ offered me the opportunity to fundraise at the Grand Reunion, which was great as I had some WRAC memorabilia which belonged to Debbie Kay Smith RIP and had been donated by Catherine Kay Smith. I also had some items from Jenny Jackson, Sandy Cawley, Julie Ayre and Sue Westlake who also donated items belonging to Sue Taylor RIP.

I was pleased to see Amanda Foster made a generous bid for my Cardiff Grand Reunion Red Wine it will surely be vinegar by now!

Nikki Young's generous bid secured her Sue T's beautiful soft leather disabled badge.

Other generous bids were from:

Val Renouf - WRAC Metal Car Badge

Viv Hamilton - Framed embroidered WRAC Badge

Heather Watterson - First Day Cover Stamps signed by Kelly Holmes

The auction raised £480.60 and we also collected donations totalling £665, making a grand total of £1,145.60. A HUGE thank you to everyone who donated items and bid for lots. I am truly grateful for your generosity. Finally, not forgetting my fantastic helpers Jennie Thomas, Helen Davies and Pat Rosewell. Thank you so much you were amazing.

Wendy Hooton



SATURDAY:

For those of us who are Branch, or Group, Secretaries, co-ordinators and/or Points of Contact, there was a short morning Branch Secs meeting for everyone to hear from and ask questions of the Association Secretary and Office Manager, as well as share ideas after the Welcome from Rowena Naile, the Chair of Membership Council. Some of the things that came up included:

- Hope to expand on the interpretation of 'Branches' to include any / all 'Groups' and 'Clubs' that are out there and exist to 'support women who served'. This is for the mutual benefit of the Group/Club, the individuals within it and the Association so that we all offer the very best experience of 'Supporting Women who Served'. Any / all of these can send reports into the 'Lioness'.
- Reminder that Branches/Groups are no longer differentiated by 'formal' or 'informal' – "where 2 or 3 gather together to support each other" then we were reminded to tell HQ and they will help promote us to others who served and may have similar interests to ours.
- Think creatively about when and how we meet, including time of day, day of week, things we do, places we go, people we meet, etc, so as to maximise potential membership at local levels. Some now work full- or part-time, while others are retired, and yet others prefer either to go out, or not, in the evenings and at weekends.
- We were also reminded to display the new Ben Fund posters wherever we think people may read them – and renew them if necessary.

Some of our suggestions upwards included:

- Some new fun-, exciting- and modern-looking general Association posters and leaflets – with short and clear messages and Point of Contact information.
- Access to some promotional materials and gifts – that can be used at events like Armed Forces Day and Remembrance, etc
- Consider the making of some short 'lived experiences' videos – by members, for potential members.
- Reach out to other networks (particularly uniformed ones).

Tanya then gave us all a short lesson on how to take the best quality pictures on our mobile/smart phones – very useful.

AGM

The Minutes appear under Association News and Updates in this edition, but this year's Guest Speaker was Lt Gen Sir Nick Pope KCB CBE, the new Chair of Cobsoe (the Confederation of Service Charities):

Lieutenant General

Sir Nicholas Pope KCB CBE

During a forty year military career, Nick witnessed how the Army and Defence accommodated change both in peace and on operations. He saw service in Bosnia and Afghanistan and held staff appointments in the Ministry of Defence at every rank from Major to Major General, where his focus was on the higher management of defence.



As Deputy Chief of the General Staff he was the Army's Principal Personnel Officer, and also led on strategic planning and programming, performance management and international relations. He was the Army Champion for safety, diversity and inclusion, and for the LGBT+ community.

In the latter stages of his service, Nick was Master of Signals, Colonel Commandant of the Brigade of Gurkhas and Chair of the Gurkha Welfare Trust. He is currently Chair of Godolphin School in Salisbury, Chair of COBSEO, the Service Charities Federation and a Board level strategic advisor. He remains an avid gardener and a keen canoeist, paddling with enthusiasm but no real technique.

Brigadier Lizzie Faithfull-Davies CBE MEng MA CEng FIMechE



Commander 102 Logistic Brigade

Brigadier Lizzie Faithfull-Davies was commissioned into the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers in 1999. She graduated from the University of Bristol in 1998 having gained

an MEng(Hons) in Mechanical Engineering and following her basic military training at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS), her first assignment was to the Queen's Royal Hussars as the Second-in Command of the Light Aid Detachment (LAD). As a Platoon Commander, she served in Northern Ireland and Bosnia and then completed Op TELIC 4 and 6 as the Officer Commanding LAD of the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment and the Royal Regiment of Wales in 2004 and 2005 respectively. She completed a corporate communications assignment with the Army Presentation Team, presenting the role of the Army to civic audiences around the country.

She promoted to Major in 2006 and went on to command 14 Armoured Company at 6 Close Support Battalion REME for two years. In this role, she served in Afghanistan on Op HERRICK 11 and 13 within the Theatre Equipment Support Battalion. She then went on to be a Company Commander at RMAS. She completed the Advanced Command and Staff Course in 2012 on promotion to Lieutenant Colonel, where she gained an MA in Defence Studies and then moved on to an assignment in Capability Management within the Army Headquarters. In 2015, she took command of 6 Armoured Close Support Battalion REME and on promotion to Colonel in August 2017, she returned to Army Headquarters on appointment as Assistant Head Resource Plans, working to Director Resources. She took command of 102 Logistic Brigade in March 2020.

She enjoys hill walking, mountaineering, ultra-running and skiing; has completed the Haute Route from Chamonix to Zermatt in both winter and summer; and has trail run the Tour du Mont Blanc and the Wainwright Coast to Coast. She has also swum the British Channel Relay and enjoys many other sports in her spare time. She loves to travel and has explored Peru, Bolivia, Cambodia and Vietnam. Most of her spare time is devoted to being in the outdoors with her two "army-issue" black Labradors.

Beating Retreat

In time for Beating Retreat, we all assembled in a mix of our hotels and the Main Hotel for safe ushering to the Leeds City Square (some of us already in our Dinner finery).

Our President, Brig (Retd) Fiona Gardner CBE, took to the dais along with The Yorkshire Military Band's conductor as the band struck up for a wonderful medley of music and marching to mark the day's Beating Retreat. There was also a goodly crowd of local Leeds and Yorkshire folk standing and listening, as well as the occasional early party-goer.

We all then returned to our own hotels to dress for dinner or made our way straight to the Queen's Hotel ahead of the Gala Dinner pre-drinks – drinks vouchers at the ready!



Beating Retreat - Leeds City Square. © 'Paul Nicholson'



Gala Dinner and drinks

After drinks we all made our way into Dinner, accompanied by The Band and Roast Beef of England. Our Padre led us in Grace to start, followed by a good meal and wonderful musical accompaniment. Partying started between courses and made for a great evening.

This year's Guest Speaker was Brig Lizzie Faithful-Davies, who was accompanied by her mother, Carrie, who served in the WRAC, alongside her sister.

Brig Lizzie was engaging and entertaining – wonderful.

Then the partying began in earnest, all to the accompaniment of the Yorkshire Military Band – who played a number or two under the baton of their President Lt Col (Retd) Mary Woollard MBE. The band's Oompah Band section also led us in some games and singing before returning to the more traditional party pieces.



Photos from the Gala Dinner are still available to purchase either as downloads or prints, from as little as £1 per image.

Please visit this link <https://gr22.wrac.org.uk/gala-dinner>
You will need to use *Lionesses* as the password

The Yorkshire Military Band's memories of the weekend



Preparations for our attendance at GR22 really begin six months in advance with sketches of what the retreat would look like, visits to the location and mustering personnel to make themselves available. Realistically, I need never worry about attendance from the band as it really is the highlight of our band calendar. We are made to feel so at home and part of the weekend that we consider ourselves to be 'your band', and we certainly are at your command where the evening dinner performance is concerned.

You would assume that many hours of rehearsal go into the Retreat performance, but as we have to hire a venue to march in, we keep it to just 5 meetings and lots of prayers on the day to bring that performance to you.

This year, we were proud to be accompanied by Silver Bugles, a group of former Regular Army Rifles buglers who are based as far away as the South Coast but travelled, at their own cost, to join forces with us. Similarly, as we had some folks at home with the effects of Covid, we welcomed two friends of mine serving in The Scots Guards Band in London. May I add that it was one of these ladies who most of you noticed - forgot to wear socks with the calf length trousers! I was surprised too....!

The evening Dinner performance again lifted our spirits, as you clearly enjoyed what we presented to you, and that is reward enough for us as musicians. We have 8 former military musicians in the band (leaving 30 'civilians') including myself and, at the time of writing, we are looking at a female musician joining us who is from The Royal Scots band. How lovely it will be to have another female veteran in the band even though, as of yet, she doesn't know about the WRAC Staff Band and the WRAC Association. She will!



My favourite part of the weekend is always the church service. This is another coming together with a purpose in mind and the chance to sing and play together once again. Plus, Rev Susan Wing is such a lovely orator and her services, relevant, thoughtful and humorous, are a delight to attend.

The folks in the band, throughout the whole weekend, were on a permanent high with the encouragement, friendship, singing, dancing and the ability shown by all the ladies to keep bar staff running full tilt. One can never quite get over the gutsy, hearty singing of the Corps march (however many times we perform it) and the hairs on my neck, as I type, stand up when I think about this relatively small snippet of music and words that binds all of us together. The only other piece of music that represents that kind of special feeling for me is The National Anthem.

We can only simply count the days until the next engagement with you all. Some of the band are still sobering up, I think, from a very late and rowdy Saturday night, but what fun and totally appropriate.

Thank you from all of us at The Yorkshire Military Band, for your support and taking us to your heart, allowing us to musically support your/our weekend.

And now, I'm off to play the Corps March just once more
Oh never leave me....!

Louise Lingard-Snape JP BA (Hons) FTCL LTCL
Director of Music
The Yorkshire Military Band



SUNDAY: Drumhead service

It was great to be able to celebrate at the weekend in March. As we had no march past, I had thought that the majority of people would go home – I was delightfully proved wrong, and we had a goodly crowd at the service. They sang the hymns in the style John Wesley advocated – “sing lustily and with good courage but do not bawl!!” Singing filled the air, accompanied and led by the Band who did their usual outstanding job. Standards were brought in, and I was able to talk in my usual fashion about what Reunion means.

This year it was all the sweeter after such difficult times, but sobering, too, that we had lost friends during the lockdown. Thank you to the readers, to the staff of The Queen’s Hotel, who transformed the dining/partying room into a place for worship, to the Association staff for organising it and, most of all, to all of you who came. I went home with a joyous heart.

Rev Sue Wing (Padre/Chaplain)

And after the Church Service we either made our ways home or, as some did, extended the stay for another night or two. We went home exhausted but exhilarated. Old friends met up with, and new friends made. If you weren’t there this time, or have never been, give consideration to the next one, and ‘roll on Grand Reunion 2025’ – wherever it might be.



Features

HM The Queen's Platinum (70th) Jubilee



The Association sent Loyal Greetings and all best wishes to HM The Queen, the Association's Patron as well as member, on the occasion of her Platinum Jubilee celebrations in June. We thanked her for her service to the country and commonwealth, along with her service in the ATS, and subsequently to the WRAC Association.

[Editor: We know that many of the Association also celebrated in Branches / Groups – and that is where you will find the reports and accompanying photos.]



As promised here are some photos from the Platinum Jubilee on Saturday 4th June. All I can say is, the day was fabulous. Myself and my son Phil thoroughly enjoyed the occasion. We saw our beautiful Queen Elizabeth and all her lovely family. We had the best seats to see her thanks to the Royal British Legion!

***Kind regards
Sharon Cocker***



NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM - ARTIST IN RESIDENCE HM The Queen's Platinum Jubilee

To mark the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II, the National Army Museum invited artist Keziah Burt to sculpt a commemorative bronze portrait bust of Her Majesty. The bust was crafted on site between Tuesday 24 and Sunday 29 May and will form part of the Museum's permanent collection once complete.

"The Queen is the Head of the British Armed Forces. The Queen's relationship with the Armed Forces began when, as Princess Elizabeth, she joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) in 1945, becoming the first female member of the Royal Family to join the Armed Services as a full-time active member. During her time in the ATS, the Princess learnt to drive and to maintain vehicles. The bust will be based on photographs of her wartime service, when she was still Princess Elizabeth.

Once the bust has been completed it will go to a foundry in Birmingham where it will be cast in bronze. The National Army Museum will have the first edition of this art work."

Keziah Burt is a British figurative artist. She studied at Winchester School of Art and Loughborough School of Art and Design, where she gained a First Class Degree in Sculpture and a Masters in Art and Design. She went on to become a teacher of art while raising her young family. Keziah is a military wife of a serving soldier in the British Army. Keziah has exhibited across the UK and Germany and has work in private collections in the UK, USA and Europe. Most recently, her portrait bust of Major General Susan Ridge CB, the first woman to hold that rank in the British Army, has been purchased for the permanent collection at the National Army Museum.



The National Army Museum is a leading authority on the British Army and its impact on society past and present. It examines the Army's role from the British Civil Wars to the modern day. Through its collections they preserve and share stories of ordinary people with extraordinary responsibilities (their collection includes those of the ATS and WRAC that the Association gifted to the Museum). They also explore the role of the Army and its relevance today.



30th ANNIVERSARY OF WRAC DISBANDMENT / INTEGRATION INTO ARMY

W0821221 WO2 MICHELLE PATTERSON

I am W0821221 WO2 Michelle Patterson and was recruited into the WRAC at the ripe old age of 17 at Palace Barracks, Hollywood, Northern Ireland. I grew up with The Troubles, VCP (vehicle check points), barred wire on traffic lights and constant helicopters, the eye in the sky. My father was in the Navy, the UDR (Ulster Defence Regiment) and then a Prison Officer at the Maze Prison for political prisoners. So, I guess it was in my blood to join HM Forces.

I commenced basic training at Guildford as WRAC (PRO) in September 1991. I was green tab and completed 10 weeks basic training with Sgt Thorne & her team. I was taught the SA80 A1 Rifle by a CSgt Wheeler from the Infantry. Also weapon drill on the parade square - absolutely amazing, with the WRAC Band and all the other Platoons on passing out.

My trade training didn't commence until April 1992, and as I was from Northern Ireland I was unable to go to the ACIO until April, so I remained at Guildford in holding in the PS accommodation, on guard etc. I did get to go home on the 48hr weekend during basic training and I also got Christmas leave.



So where was I 6th April 1992? I commenced trade training in the Royal Military Police at Rousillon Barracks, Chichester in a mixed squad of male & female soldiers, both direct entries and voluntary transfers. I was accommodated in a Sandhurst block, and I remember being on guard duty in the keep and doing fire piquet with that trolley & hose pipe.

Whilst at Chichester I had to exchange my WRAC green beret and cap badge for the red beret and RMP cap badge. I also received some back pay and informed I would now receive the same pay as my male counterparts.

I completed trade training and was posted to Germany as a LCpl; promoted to Cpl; and learnt to ski in Austria when the Army had their own ski chalets. I served in the UK, Canada, Australia, N.Ireland and Afghanistan. On completing 22 years full Colour Service I reached the rank of WO2.

I left for 1 day, and then re-joined the Royal Artillery on a FTRS (full time reserve service) contract where I still am 8 years on. I am a member of the Shropshire WRAC Branch. They said, "join the Army see the world", and I did just that. Thank you

MEL BODY (EX W0817829 CPL)

On Monday 6th April 1992 I was still a relatively new recruit to the WRAC serving at HQ UKLF, Wilton. We were quite a large female contingent of mainly staff clerks and drivers. I still have the booklet we were given to commemorate "A service to mark the formation of the Adjutant General's Corps (Service and Personnel Support Branch)". I did not attend the WRAC final parade at Guildford the previous month as I volunteered to stay behind to cover our job roles to allow longer serving WRAC members to attend. I don't think I realised the enormity of the change at the time as I was still adjusting to life in the Army generally. We had a service in the NAAFI and I was at one end as one of the "newer recruits" (I passed out of Guildford in August 1991) and the longest serving members of the WRAC at the other end. We exchanged berets and stable belts. I soon realised the importance of the WRAC and joined the WRAC Association not long after.

BETTY GASH (NEE SAMMS)

My article shares my experiences and highlights there was a different life for some WRAC personnel outside 'the barracks' in April 1992 and that the WRAC disbandment and integration into the main British Army went well.

On 6th April I was a Sergeant Military Clerk on maternity leave in Peterborough awaiting the arrival of my first child (due date 17 April, born 3 days early). I would either have been taking a walk around the green open spaces in Orton Goldhay, or sat in the back garden deep in thought with mixed emotions of happiness and anxiety! I was pleased the 3 years commuting to Peterborough most weekends from Guildford and London (18 months each location) had ended, happy that I had no complications during pregnancy, and a relief to have secured my preference posting to CMETS Beaconsfield in July, and childcare arrangements were in place. Naturally I was anxious of the actual birth, and of being a mother whilst still serving, but also for future income, as RAF husband was on Terminal leave after 12 years' service with no permanent employment - we had a high interest rate mortgage and bills to pay. Military-wise I was conscious about fitting back into my Army uniform and passing the Annual Basic fitness Test, so I started running and exercising 6 weeks after the birth of our son.

Fantastic news, my husband got employment through a job vacancy in the 'Resettlement Bulletin'. I quickly settled into my new posting and in October passed the BFT and in a personal best time. The following year, 1993, I represented the Army once again at both Cross Country and Athletics, and was delighted to be promoted to Staff Sergeant and posted to the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

I do recall receiving an official letter during maternity leave with notification of the WRAC disbandment and my transfer into a newly formed Corps - the Adjutant General's Corps (SPS) Branch.



FEATURES – OTHER

ROYAL HOSPITAL CHELSEA – Female Statuette

I am excited to tell you about a project I have been working on, namely the possibility of having a permanent something / fixture at the Royal Hospital Chelsea (RHC) to recognise there are now women residing there. This began this in January 2020 and got passed around various departments/people, due to people leaving, relocating and changing positions, and then we were also at the beginning of the pandemic and experiencing lockdowns.

Finally in May 2021 contact was made with Tina Kilnan - Heritage and Assurance Manager and ex WRAC! It was a breath of fresh air after 16 months of trying to speak to the right person who could take this forward. In July 2021 the Heritage Steering Committee put forward the proposal to the Executive Board.

In September 2021 the RHC asked if we would consider commissioning a piece of silverware to commemorate the occasion rather than a permanent fixture in the grounds. This could be housed in the museum alongside a silver statuette of a male Chelsea Pensioner. When the new museum is completed, it can aid in telling the story of the evolution of the Royal Hospital in its rightful place in the timeline. It would be a more visible tribute to mark this momentous occasion. It could be utilised at events involving the female cohort and immediately become a very interesting talking point. Ultimately it would also make a significant contribution to the heritage collection for future generations to enjoy.

The WRAC Association Management Board agreed to the proposal of a table statuette and the next meeting of the RHC Executive Board was scheduled for December 2021. In February 2022 it was approved by the RHC Executive Board, just over 2 years after my initial enquiry!! I had made contact with a recommended silversmiths and passed the details on to the WRAC Association.

I look forward to updating you in the next Lioness when the table statuette should be in its rightful place, to celebrating its arrival with our Chelsea Pensioners in due course, and hope you are as excited as I am.

Thank you so much as always.
Suaviter in modo fortiter in re

Wendy Hooton



Wendy Hooton and our other fabulous fundraisers work hard to raise additional funds for your association. If you would like to make a donation to support our work or organise a fundraising event, please visit the website or email info@wraca.org.uk. Every pound donated to the WRAC Association allows us to ensure that women who served are supported and recognised. And don't forget to take photos when you are hosting a fundraising event as we love to print them in your Lioness!

GUILDFORD CATHEDRAL – ASSOCIATION CENTENARY PLAQUE

This plaque, to celebrate the Association's Centenary, started life in 1919 but then Covid-19 intervened. At last the Cathedral authorities have agreed and commissioned a design for the plaque to go on the wall above the Books of Remembrance.

We are currently working with the Cathedral on a potential date for its formal dedication – we will keep you posted. (While there will be good number of you in Guildford for Remembrance Sunday, the Cathedral already has a packed programme that day including a Requiem Mass).

ROYAL HOSPITAL CHELSEA

The Royal Hospital Chelsea are promoting that they have space available for applications. They are particularly looking for more females to join Carol Knight (featured in this advert) and all the other ex-ATS and ex-WRAC ladies already living there (along with an ex-QA and ex-RE). Please contact the RHC if you are interested in finding out more.

"IT FELT LIKE HOME RIGHT AWAY."

WE ARE WELCOMING APPLICATIONS TO BECOME A CHELSEA PENSIONER.

To find out more, contact our admissions team:
☎ 020 7881 5204
✉ admissions@chelsea-pensioners.org.uk
🌐 www.chelsea-pensioners.co.uk/become-chelsea-pensioner

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A BIBLE STORY

Hidden at the back of a cupboard in our Winchester office a bible turned up. The book itself wasn't unusual, but the inscription from 1978 bore an unusual name: Rupert Ballantyne Dunn. Could we find this child who would now be a man? And what brought his bible into our office in the first place? An internet search showed that he had served in the RAF, and a few clicks later we had tracked him down and posted it off! It turned that our connection was not with Rupert, but with his father David. Surprised to be reunited with this lost treasure, David agreed to put the story on paper and solve the mystery of how the Women's Royal Army Corps Association ended up with a small boy's bible.



The inscription that started it all

This is the story of two bibles that started together, were separated, and met again 35 years later. To begin at the beginning, I was born 90 years ago as a Man of Kent, the son of a Durham father and a Welsh mother. Came World War II my sister Margaret and I, having survived the German bombing of Portsmouth and Plymouth, were evacuated to Wales for safety. The school closed after D-Day and we returned to Kent just in time for the V1 Doodlebugs to rain down on us. I felt that Hitler had a personal grudge against me, and I was glad at his demise. In 1950 I was called up for National

Service, went to the Officer Cadet School at Eaton Hall in Cheshire but decided that I wanted to go into the Regular Army and moved to the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst for the next two years. I was commissioned into the Durham Light Infantry in the year of the Queen's coronation and over the next nine years saw action in Korea, Egypt's Canal Zone, the Arabian Peninsula and Cyprus. The Battalion's next posting was to Berlin and as Adjutant I was involved in moving the Battalion there, our arrival coinciding with the start of the Russians building the Wall. I had met a girl, Julia Norman-Ballantyne, during our embarkation leave and as she was an air hostess, she was able to fly into Berlin and join me. I was leaving the Battalion to go to the British Army Staff College in Camberley and Julia drove back to England with me in my new sports car. The journey back was sufficient for us to agree to marry, and we tied the knot in 1962.



David and Julia on their wedding day

Our first married posting was to Exeter and while there our elder son, Timothy, was born. We then moved to Colchester where, one year and ten days after Timothy's arrival, our second son, Rupert, was born. They knew that they were not twins but did think that they shared a birthday. We celebrated the day on the Saturday between the two real birthdays. Eight years later at prep school they discovered the truth.

Six years after being at the British Army Staff College I was sent as a student to the US Army Staff College. It was before air trooping and we four sailed on the last voyage of the first liner Queen Elizabeth. We were at sea for the 4th of July! Julia was pregnant again and I was tasked with guiding the two- and three-year-old boys around the decks on their child reins, much to the amusement of the American passengers.

At Leavenworth our elder daughter, Clare-Louise, was born and our younger daughter, Jessica, was born two years later in Washington DC while I was on the staff at the British Embassy. We then returned to regimental duty in Germany and Northern Ireland.

By good fortune in 1973 we were back in the United States, this time on an exchange post with the American Army. Timothy was left behind at preparatory school in Yateley and Rupert joined him a year later. The return from America in 1975 was the signal to abandon life in Army quarters and buy a house. We looked in an arc of one hour from London by train and settled on an old Victorian house at Hindhead, living there for the next 22 years. The boys moved to a boarding school called Seaford College. The site was close to Chichester and used Chichester Cathedral for Carol Services and Confirmation, and it is here that the bibles make their entrance. For the confirmation of Timothy and Rupert on 10th September 1978 we gave them each a leather-bound bible duly inscribed with their full names and date of confirmation.

The purchase of a house only one hour from London gave me six years of commuting at the end of which I reached 50 years of age and was placed on the Special List. This is a lovely Army euphemism meaning that you are not in the least bit special; you will get no further promotion and henceforward be employed in Major's jobs. To circumvent this, I was offered the post of Military Attaché in Sofia, Bulgaria but I turned it down and was sent to a Public Relations post in Aldershot. This led me to going with 5 Brigade to the Falklands, making me the only soldier in the world to have been in the Korean War and the Falklands campaign. This time I travelled on the liner Queen Elizabeth II. After that and one last commuting tour I decided to leave the active army and applied for a Retired Officer job.

I was interviewed and offered two jobs. One in London and the other in Guildford. As Guildford was only 13 miles from our home in Hindhead it was an obvious choice, and I took over as Corps Secretary to the WRAC. My predecessor had been a male Brigadier who had been doing the job for ten years and was leaving on account of age. The job involved being responsible for Corps property and investments, the HQ Officers Mess membership and property, the WRAC Museum, Editing and distributing the Corps magazine Lioness, control of the ATS and WRAC Benevolent Funds, and control of the Princess Royal's Memorial Fund. Finally, I was also General Secretary to the WRAC Association (which incorporated the Queen Mary's Auxiliary Army Corps and the Auxiliary Territorial Service).

I had an assistant Corps Secretary and a Secretary to the Benevolent Funds, who was employed and paid for by the funds. Apart from preparing five accounts for audit the biggest single task was organizing the Association Grand Reunions every three years. My first was at Harrogate in 1985 at the newly constructed Conference Centre with its adjacent hotel. It had only recently opened and had only been used once before the WRAC Association event. It had been used for a toy fair, which I realised when I found LEGO pieces under my bed. The second was in 1988 to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the formation of the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS). The event consisted of a service in St Pauls Cathedral to which The Queen was invited on the Friday and a reunion in the Barbican Centre on the Saturday. As well as informal meetings and a lunch for branch secretaries in the morning there was the AGM in the afternoon and in the evening a star-studded entertainment with Harry Secombe as the headline act.



*David accompanies
Her Majesty the Queen*

My third Grand Reunion coincided with the decision to abolish the WRAC as a separate Corps in the Army. Guildford, with its splendid Cathedral and the physical and spiritual home of the WRAC was the obvious site. I had commissioned two new stained-glass windows for the Cathedral Nave. They were for the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps and Queen Marys Auxiliary Army Corps, both from World War I, to add to the windows already there dedicated to the ATS and WRAC. The Cathedral Fabric committee were not enthusiastic as they wanted the Nave to be bathed in white light. In the end they agreed, and HRH The Duchess of Kent as Controller Commandant unveiled the windows during the reunion service. The next problem was space. There was nowhere big enough in the Depot barracks nor in Guildford (even the Yvonne Arnaud

Theatre was too small). Then I had a "light bulb" moment and realised that the Country Club complex at Frimley, only a few miles away, where they hold the World Darts Championship with its huge auditorium and catering facilities would be ideal and so it proved.

But back to the boys and their bibles.

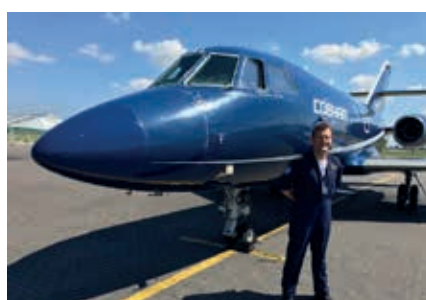
While I was at Guildford they completed their studies at Seaford College, Timothy attended Surrey University on an Army Bursary, achieved a degree in Civil Engineering, went on to Sandhurst and spent nine years in the Royal Engineers including service in Bosnia, three years in Northern Ireland and in the Falklands making the battlefields safe. Rupert failed to convince the Royal Air Force that they needed him upon leaving school, so he became an Estate Agent for a few years and tried joining again. This time he was accepted and went to the RAF Academy at Cranwell. Princess Diana took his passing out parade and he was assigned as a navigator on Tornado fighters. He served in the Middle East enforcing the no-fly zone over Iraq after Gulf War II. He returned, many times, to the Falklands during his service, to help provide Air Defence to the Airhead established at Mount Pleasant, as a deterrence to the



Rupert joins the RAF



Timothy in Bosnia



Rupert in more recent times

Argentine Air Force.

His ambition had always been to be a pilot, so after 12 years with the RAF he left to peruse a commercial flying career. He took private flying lessons in Florida, qualified, and left the RAF to join Cobham Aviation as a pilot. Cobham (now Draken) have a contract to provide the "enemy" for RAF and Navy training. Rupert has continued to provide this service with Draken testing NATO air defence systems for the past 18 years.

Coincidentally, with my time at Guildford I was involved with St Luke's Church in Grayshott. I was a member of the church council for fifteen years and Churchwarden for three years. Both jobs required constant reference to the Bible, and I found an unused copy in the house and took it to the office where I kept it for reference purposes and for practising my readings.

With the decision to disband the WRAC, the barracks in Guildford were closed and my office moved next door to the Army Map Depot. After a year, and the creation of the Adjutant General's Corps, the office was moved to Worthy Down near Winchester. I left the post in 1996 and have enjoyed receiving the Lioness ever since.

When Rupert received his bible in the post, he decided to bring it as an exhibit at my 90th Birthday party. Came the great day and Rupert told elder brother Timothy of the recovery of his bible at which point Timothy reached to his bookshelf and produced his copy. So, at my 90th Birthday lunch the two bibles were displayed and joined together again after 35 years apart. Like all good fairy tales there is a happy ending, and we thank the WRAC Association for putting it all together.

Thanks to David for writing his memories for us, for sending the accompanying photos, and for his years of service as WRAC Association Secretary and Lioness editor. With very best wishes from the Lioness



The bibles are reunited at David's 90th birthday

Events

GENERAL

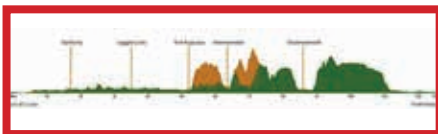
Marg Davies' 100 Mile Inverness & Great Glen Way Walk 2022

It's that time of year again, time for my 2022 charity walk. I've completed most of my annual 100 Mile Walks in various parts of England and one in Wales. I felt it was time to redress the balance so this year's walk is in Scotland - the flattest bit of Scotland I could find - the Great Glen Way (plus an extra day's walking to make it up to 100 miles). I intended to "bimble" around Inverness on Friday 22nd April 2022 visiting Fort George, Cawdor Estate and possibly Culloden which makes up the miles. My walk 'proper', along the Great Glen Way, started on Saturday 23rd April at Inverness. I walked approximately 80 miles of the Great Glen Way via Fort Augustus and onto the finish in Fort William on Thursday 28th April.

Each year my supporters amaze and humble me with their generosity. I'm trying to raise funds for two charities again. The first, the Women's Royal Army Corps Association, is the only veteran's charity set up specifically to cater for the needs of female veterans. Females are often the forgotten 'heroes' - forgotten by society in general but also frequently under-resourced by 'Veteran' society as well. The WRAC Association gives not only financial support to female army veterans but also provides emotional support to a section of our community that often suffers from isolation and loneliness. It provides a safe haven where female veterans find the support and friendship that is often all that is required to overcome their difficulties.

My second, The National Caribbean Memorial Charity, is a very small 'not for profit charity' run by volunteers, whose aim is to commission a Monument for Caribbean Military & Merchant Sea

Personnel in the National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire, in recognition of their contributions and sacrifices to Britain and the Commonwealth.



(I'm walking the green Low Route not the orange High Route)



INVICTUS GAMES

I caught up recently with Denise Kidger, one of our members from the North East, who competed in this year's Invictus Games in The Netherlands.

How many were in the GB team? 65 were entered, although 61 actually took part (due to illness etc)



What was the selection ... ? The initial selection announcement was 31st October 2019, to compete in March 2020. Then Covid-19 intervened and it was postponed to the April, and then cancelled ... until April of this year. This meant that individuals were preparing for, and then warming down, for various dates, which takes it out of you. I and others, were also concerned whether they would have to re-apply for the new 2022 date.

... and preparation process? In July 2021, my preparations and training took a huge knock as I badly broke my humerus (playing badminton on holiday with her niece). I still do not have full functionality in my arm – which has meant re-learning how to do everything 1-handed/armed.

Which events were you selected for / took part in? I took part in 1- and 4-minute indoor rowing, 100m athletics, 100m relay (I was selected for the relay on the day and hadn't done relay since school!) and discus, swimming (back-and breast-stroke) and recumbent cycling.

The cycling was a real 'out of body experience' as out of the team of 4 I was the only one not to medal ... but the US and Australian medalists came around the track and offered me a photo opportunity with them coming round the home bend. They linked arms with me and then, when round the bend and in sight of the finishing line, they encouraged me to finish ahead of them. They were so generous – and it just shows what the whole experience is like ... supportive, while also competitive.

What is your WRAC and service history? The military runs through our family in a huge way – late brother and two uncles in the Fusiliers, Dad in the TA, my sister married into the army and so, I joined up - the WRAC in Guildford on 6th September 1989. I was the first female from the family to join up and I served longer than any of our menfolk. I was in the first 'compulsory combatant' group – although none of the units we were ultimately sent to would allow us to carry or use arms. My 'trade' was that of Admin Clerk – although I really wanted to be Pay Corps but was told to apply for that after joining up.

I served a total of 8 years, having moved across to the AGC in April 1922, and served in Aldershot, Germany, the Balkans three times, the UK (with the 9th and 12th Lancers in Norfolk) and in Northern Ireland. I found the move across to the AGC, and the men's attitudes to us, very challenging and it played a huge role on my physical and mental wellbeing. I feel a lot of my injuries are because of us trying to 'keep up' with the men.

After the 8 years I took 2½ years out, which did also include a 6-month tour of the Balkans ... again – and then re-joined in 2002, staying until my medical discharge in 2014. (Dame) Kelly Holmes was one of my PTIs, and I found her to be fantastic.

I suffered physical injury while serving along with mental issues. The Army were not good at supporting mental health issues at the time, which was exacerbated by my brother's and nephew's deaths. The Army just did not recognise PTSD in women. I have been having counselling since 2011, and was ultimately medically discharged in 2014.

What do you do now, apart from Invictus Games? I now work part-time with the Finchale Group, an 'award winning charity that offers valuable support to veterans, service leavers, service personnel, reservists and their families', based here in the North East. It is also a construction academy and offers a variety of other courses, particularly online during lockdown.

Help4Heroes also helped with my recovery through their Sports Recovery Programme, including a week's tennis course (tennis is the one sport I have always enjoyed and Wimbledon is a highlight of my year). The WRAC Benevolence Fund (along with the AGC) also supported me by helping pay for my gym membership when I was preparing for Invictus – for which I am HUGELY grateful. H4H also has a hugely successful Adaptive Sports Programme, which has huge power and momentum.

How has Invictus helped you? When I initially applied I was given 1 – 1½ minutes to answer the question "what would it mean for you to be chosen?" With my background in photography I put together a video story-board of "this is what I dare to dream" – and it got me on the team!

Invictus, and everything connected to it, has helped break the cycle of not thinking I am worthy of anything. I didn't think I was 'worthy' of being on the team, or of being involved in any way.

Invictus games are known as the Friendly Games and everyone encourages everyone else (as with my recumbent cycling). I am still in touch with many of those competing, whether from the UK or elsewhere in the world. All the medalists were given a bunch of tulips (it was in Holland, after all), but I didn't get a bunch – so one of the Dutch competitors gave me her bunch, which was so special.

The teams are so supportive in every way – they have mental, physical, coaching and support teams. These are

available at any time – something I made use of when I was about to be introduced to Prince Harry and my 'nerve' went, back to feeling unworthy again. The mental health team stepped up and got me back on track.



And what about the future? Sadly, my physical, and particularly mental, health have gone backwards since the April games. But I am focusing on trying to be selected again for the next Games, in Dusseldorf, Germany – either as a competitor and/or as an ambassador. The joining instructions come out this July, so I will try and see if me and any of the criteria fit each other. I would also like to resume my photography business.

This coming weekend is a 'Homecoming' and Reunion Weekend at Drayton Manor Hotel, which I am really looking forward to as it will be lovely to see everyone again.

Future GB Invictus Games teams will be funded, for the next 5 years, by the RBL, so it will be interesting to see if there is any change of focus and support from that H4H offered.

I have always felt my purpose is to help others, whether in, or out, of the army, and that is what I ultimately want to carry on doing.

So I finished by asking some other non-Invictus questions:

What is on your training playlist?

Demons, by Imagine Dragon, particularly when the training and life is a bit tough. This is my spike song.

Who would be your ideal dinner guests?

Joanna Lumley and Judy Dench – both inspirational and funny – and Prince Harry. He is a fellow veteran, who suffers from PTSD, is very family orientated with a wicked sense of humour.

... at home or the pub? Oh, at home. You don't have to worry who is watching or listening!

The WRAC, and then Invictus Games, saw something in me that I didn't – and I am very grateful for that.

WHAT DOES BEING A MEMBER OF A BRANCH MEAN?

"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".

"RECOGNITION AT LAST"

A commemoration on the beachfront at Great Yarmouth

As cold wind and rain blew in from the North Sea onto a car park in Great Yarmouth, over 70 WRAC Association members gathered for the rededication of a previously damaged plaque. The plaque which commemorates the deaths of 26 ATS servicewomen in a Nazi bombing raid has been replaced exactly 12 months before the 80th anniversary of this tragic event.

Held at the Imperial Hotel on Sunday 15th May, Fiona Gardner welcomed the guests and thanked Joan Awbery and Meg Watson, (who sadly is no longer with us) for fundraising for the original plaque and tracing the families of the ATS women. The Vice President commended Joan's tireless work over the last 30 years ensuring that these women are not forgotten, and noted that so many families over the years had visited the plaque. Fiona thanked Joan Awbery and Lorna Lansdown, both over 100 years old for attending and said how it was essential that this generation is not forgotten. "Those who served deserve to be remembered and those that died in service deserve to be remembered by every generation."



Two cadets from the Combined Cadet Force East Norfolk Sixth Form College had been holding tightly to the WRAC flag covering the plaque as our padre the Rev. Sue Wing delivered a short service and rededicated the plaque. Then Joan Awbery assisted by her daughter carried out the unveiling.

During the service Rowena Naile laid a posy of 8 roses and the Chairman of the Great Yarmouth Royal British Legion Branch laid a wreath. Later in the afternoon Area Co-Ordinator Lyn Hatch laid one of the roses on each of the local ATS graves - 6 at Caister Cemetery and 2 at the Roman Catholic Cemetery.

Lyn told the Lioness: "Whilst I was researching, I came across extracts of letters from the families from the early 1990's who, for 50 years, had only been told that their loved ones had been killed in service. I was really touched by what had been written by the families and friends saying just how much this memorial meant to them." Here are a few extracts:

Sister of Private Bernadette Bell:

"I lost my dearly loved sister Bernadette aged 22. I have been trying for 50 years to find some relatives of any of the girls she died with, only to draw a blank ...You are the only person I have ever been in contact with."

Sibling of Private May Johnson:

"I don't think I will ever forget the day I was told she had been killed. Thank you for the photographs (of May's grave at Great Yarmouth at the service in 1994) it makes me feel proud to have had May as my sister."

Sister of Lance Corporal Anna Macleod:

"Anna's death was a shattering blow to us all. I named my first daughter after her. Anna was just about to be commissioned and had a promising career in front of her."

Sister of Private Jessie Sharp:

"It was a great loss for me, for I loved my sister dearly. I have missed her for fifty years. May 11th is always a very emotional day for me. My father was terribly upset, it ruined his health and he died at 58."

Sister of Private Roma Pearson:

"I thought that no-one had ever cared about the loss of life... It was Roma's first posting and had written her one and only letter to her me saying she could not understand why it was considered to be a dangerous area. My four brothers served: one in the tanks, one in the Desert war, one in Burma, one on convoys to Russia - so my parents were prepared to hear a son being wounded or killed, but the only member of the family to die was Roma."

Cousin of Private Vera Mann:

"She was really happy in her life in the ATS. She came to see me on her last leave, just before Christmas 1942. I have still got the photograph of her in her uniform."

Sister of Private Ivy Moore:

"Flowers are placed on Ivy's grave each year, and that the Grimsby Branch of the WRAC Association held a service in church for the three ATS girls buried there. Ivy Moore and one of the sisters of Roma Pearson were the only families have known each other. Ivy had been due to announce her engagement to be married the week she lost her life."

Sister of Private Kathleen Gaunt:

"Recognition at last".

WE WILL REMEMBER HER

Find our Great Yarmouth ATS ladies

At the service at Great Yarmouth we also launched a campaign to attempt to get all 26 ATS servicewomen included on their local war memorial. So far, seven have been found within local churches, towns or villages, leaving nineteen to be found or added.

We are asking our Lioness readers to please help. If you live near, or are passing, any of the places listed below, please let us know whether you can find the ATS women's names. Telling us they're not there is just as helpful as letting us know when they are. We will then start the process of contacting the local authorities responsible for the upkeep of the memorials.

Full details of the names and locations can be found on our website at wraca.org.uk/rememberher. Here are the areas we hope you may be passing:

Cobholm, Norfolk;
Boscombe, Bournemouth;
Crouch End, London;
Grimsby, Lincolnshire;
Northampton;
Aston-cum-Aughton, Yorkshire;
Bingley, Yorkshire;
Haltemprice, Yorkshire;
Beeston Hill, Leeds;
Moston, Lancashire;
Stockton, Teesside;
Gosforth, Northumberland;
Doncaster;
Handsworth, Sheffield;
Germiston, Glasgow; and
Morningside, Edinburgh.

We hope that by the 80th anniversary of their deaths, May 2023, we can ensure all of these servicewomen are appropriately honoured in their hometowns.

Please let the Association Office know of any you find / don't find.



MANCHESTER 10k

10th Anniversary Run Manchester Sunday 22nd May 2022

This is what The WRAC Association means to us: Togetherness, Pride and Comradeship. Seeing each other across the line.

Pip Flegel



Firstly, a HUGE thank you to all those who have supported our 10th Anniversary 10k Run. Whether it was by running, walking, supporting, donating, fundraising or purchasing a t-shirt to wear on the day in your homes as you were unable to join us, I really appreciate your support. I am truly thankful we have got through the Covid-19 pandemic and were able to show our strength, comradeship and determination to the people of Manchester.

It was another anniversary in Manchester. The 10k event coincided with the 5th anniversary of the Manchester Arena terrorist attack, which happened on 22nd May 2017 and killed 22 people. About 20,000 Manchester Run participants held a one minutes applause for all those victims. Some of the survivors were amongst the 20,000. A very poignant and emotional moment for us all.

I always knew I wanted to go back to Manchester for the 10th Anniversary Run as that's where it all began in 2013. After 2 years of Virtual Runs nothing could be certain. Manchester 10k is the largest 10k in Europe with 20,000 runners.

At last a date was released, Sunday 15th May 2022, hooray we were on! Many entered the 10k and then the news came through 'the date had changed'!!! Some were able to book the new date, Sunday 22nd May, but others weren't so lucky as they had other commitments. I also had the task of finding a venue for our post run supper. Thank you to Helen Davies for joining me on the recce - what a full 2 days/nights we had!

Well we made it, and it was absolutely brilliant to all be together at a real 10k event. The atmosphere at the first briefing in the City Centre Premier Inn, where everyone received their t-shirts was electric! The Manchester Bee on the sleeves of the t-shirt went down very well, including with the media. Thank you to Tanya at HQ for ordering the t-shirts and liaising with the supplier with regards to the design. Thank you, also, to Helen Davies for sorting and distributing the t-shirts, and Pat "Budgie" Rosewell for selling the raffle tickets. I am really grateful for your help each year.

A huge thank you to Kath Kay and Val Renouf for taking all the "Run kit" to Manchester for me. I'm grateful they had a big enough car for their own kit and t-shirts, raffle prizes, tombola drum (thank you to Lyn Hatch for the loan), banner (donated by Annette Jackson and Pam Malcolm), Chelsea Bear (donated by Jean Simmons RHC), and Mo Bear, our mascot.

This year we also had a Manchester Bear, which was made and raffled by Lorraine Gauntlett and Taff Doughty raising £250. It was won by Jules Calder, who couldn't come to Manchester due to her much-awaited knee operation date coming through for the Monday! She kindly donated the bear to me.

I am extremely grateful to all these people.

Sunday was upon us and there was a Half Marathon event as well. Most of us were in the Pink Wave and had an afternoon start time of 1247hrs for our 10k. We had a couple of runners at 1130hrs.

It was buzzing, with celebrities running and Jessica Ennis-Hill interviewing, everyone was in high spirits. Jessica interviewed us, as did Michelle from BBC Radio Manchester. Pat Rosewell had met Paula Radcliffe at Euston station and told her what we were doing, so Paula gave us a shout out on TV too. We had Manchester University students asking to interview us for their TikTok page (another social platform!). It was amazing.

Pip Flegel was our wheelchair entrant, who has been pushed by Jañ Brant Cassidy for the last 2 Virtual Runs. Due to an injury our fabulous Lionesses stepped up and volunteered to push Pip. They were instantly known as the "Blue Team" after Pip's love of Manchester City. This for me had to be the greatest moment as they approached the finishing line the smiles said it all and in an incredible time of 1.31.08. I heard how they had stopped at the Manchester United ground where Pip had a photo waving her Manchester City flags. It was hilarious, especially as Manchester

City had just won the Premier League and were having a Victory Parade in the city. My congratulations to the amazing Blue Team - Ali Brown, Mary Woollard, Barbara Davies, Heather Bradbury, Jackie Walton and Naomi Burden - you were exceptional.

Rowena Naile was our first Lioness home in a fabulous time of 42.57 minutes followed by Helen Davies in 56.14 minutes. A special mention to our octogenarian Sandy Cawley who came over the line at an incredible time of 1.37.31. Sandy had recently broken her wrist and had her arm in plaster; she showed true Lioness spirit soldiering on! Well done ladies, fantastic times.

After a post run photo, proudly showing our medals, we went for a few drinks and took more photos! It was then time to get ready for the Post Run Supper at Manchester Hall, formerly a Freemason Hall. Our event was in the Museum Room which displays historic uniforms and regalia in glass fronted showcases. It was amazing! The ladies and gents bathrooms were spectacular too! The supper over and raffle drawn it was time to say goodnight. We were all (well most), quite tired having had a late start for the 10k and a hectic, exciting, wild weekend!

Our mascot Mo Bear, carried by Karen "Radders" Radford, has now been promoted to Lieutenant. Karen was one of the original runners in 2013 and even brought her 2013 medal with her. Benita Davies took charge of Chelsea Bear, the Supporters Bear.

My special thanks to our fabulous photographers Heather Gaughran and Rosie Garrison. I really appreciate you turning up every year and clicking those cameras! Great job as always.

Thank you to the WRAC Facebook groups for allowing me to post our events and for your support. Thank you to everyone who has sponsored our Lionesses (and a couple of Lions), fundraised and made donations, your generosity is overwhelming. Special mention to Lynne Greer, who cooked a 2 course lunch for 40 at her local yacht club and raised £200, and Birmingham Branch £225 remembering Mo Deeley. Our fundraising page is on £6,500 with a couple more sponsor forms to come in and more Gift Aid to be added.

I couldn't do this without all your support and look forward to next year (I think!), venue tbc.

KEEP ROARING!!

SUAVITER IN MODO FORTITER IN RE

Wendy Hooton



Virtual Runners





NOT FORGOTTEN ASSOCIATION – BUCKINGHAM PALACE GARDEN PARTY

I recently attended the Not Forgotten garden party at Buckingham Palace. It was a fabulous day and I got the opportunity to wear my medal with pride. Unfortunately, I didn't get to meet the Princess Royal but did meet many others.

MaryAnn Clark



**MaryAnn Clark at Buckingham Palace
with Wayne Sleep, Anita Harris,
Su Pollard, and Esther Rantzen**

.....

Recently I had the honour and privilege to be invited to the Not Forgotten Association garden party at Buckingham Palace, alongside my darling husband Rob and several WRAC friends. I can't begin to describe exactly how I was feeling as I entered the Palace grounds. I was emotionally overwhelmed; a mixture of feelings came over me.

Firstly, I had thoughts of my late parents - how very proud they would have been to know their daughter was actually on the inside! Who'd have ever thought that. I wore my Mum's crucifix that Dad had bought her; I wanted to feel them both with me that day. This would have been such a great bragging opportunity for them both had they been around. They would give dined out on this for ages. Lol.

Tears were not far away at times during the day and I was an emotional wreck inside. I also thought of my own two daughters, knowing how proud they both were of us, as we are both veterans. That said, there was lots of laughter too. It was wall to wall celebrity everywhere I

looked. Each and every celebrity was so very kind and thoughtful, only too willing to indulge us with countless requests for photos.

It was so lovely to see HRH Princess Anne and her husband Vice Admiral Sir Tim Laurence spend so much time talking individually to the guests who were being presented.

When I say it was the best day ever, I can really say that it ranks right up there. This little kid from an ordinary working class background gets invited to Buckingham Palace did that really happen? YOU BET IT DID!!

Dorothy Mitchelmore



**Dorothy
& Rob
Mitchelmore**

**with Anton
du Beke**



HRH The Princess Royal, Princess Anne



With Esther Rantzen



Rob & Dorothy Mitchelmore and the NFA sculpture

There were loads of celebrities who all seemed not to worry about having a selfie with all and sundry as they were enjoying themselves as much as we were. The afternoon ended with the Royal Marines Band Beating Retreat in front of Princess Anne.

This was always on our Bucket List, brought to fruition by the Not Forgotten Association and our own WRAC Association.

Linda and Jackie Clark Salisbury branch



With Yeomen of the Guard



Jackie & Linda Clark and Amanda Foster



After the disappointment of not being able to attend in 2020 our long-awaited invitation finally arrived for us to attend this year. There was one problem though, what to wear - OMG. It wasn't until the week before that we finally made our minds up and chose our outfits. We only looked in 50 shops in 3 counties! It was worth it though.

Off we went mid-morning to catch our train, even being complimented by strangers travelling with us. They were excited for us upon finding out where we were going. Even the ticket collector said he was going to look after us.

We met with Amanda, Patsy and a couple of others, under the clock at Waterloo and jumped in a taxi to the Palace and found we had a little way to walk but not too far. Walking through the gates was a thrill - no bearskins in sight but the Ghurkhas looked very smart guarding the Palace. Security was efficient and took no time at all. Then it was a walk behind the Palace to the gardens.

What an amazing sight - beautiful lawns and thousands of people dressed in their finery. The weather was glorious; apparently the day before it rained off and on all day.

We quickly found other Association members, said hello, and then hurried to the tea tent. We couldn't wait to see how everything looked, never mind how it tasted. The food was wonderful, plentiful and all served with a smile.

RHC FOUNDER'S DAY 2022 Thursday 9th June 2022

Happy 333rd Birthday, Royal Hospital Chelsea 2022

"I was so excited to receive one of the 20 tickets available to the WRAC Association to join the celebrations at RH Chelsea. I booked the earliest train I could as it has been a few decades since I went to London ALONE. No-one to check I was going in the right direction (if you know me you'll understand). I successfully negotiated not just one train into Euston but also 2 underground trains, watching all the locals rushing around like the devil himself was behind them, why? Or maybe it's my age; I've realised no point rushing - just get there, preferably in one piece.

Having arrived early at RH Chelsea I was able to walk around the grounds admiring the splendid architecture and soak up the history and ambience of what was to be a great day. I'm glad I'm an early bird as I was able to have a lovely natter with Jean Simmonds (I hope I've spelt your name correctly, and do get well soon). It was lovely to hear how much fun it is to live in RH Chelsea and how much they look after you.



The parade started and the In Pensioners were resplendent in their uniforms. The band of the Grenadier Guards provided the music, we even had Pipers on the Balcony. The Sovereign's Mace was paraded with great skill and received the utmost respect from those attending.

Vice-Admiral Sir Timothy Laurence took the Parade, chatting to as many (if not all) of the In Pensioners. It is little wonder he was a bit croaky when he gave the address. He did confess that the King of the Belgians was asked first, then when he was unable to attend, RH Chelsea asked his wife, The Princess Royal, Princess Anne, who had a previous engagement that day too. So, he was third choice! He didn't need to worry, he gave a wonderful address, thanking the In Pensioners for their service to our Queen and Country and the many staff who take care of them. He praised our amazing Queen Elizabeth who is now the longest serving British Monarch in our history. Sir Timothy then led his own commemoration to the Falklands war, whose 40th Anniversary is fast approaching, as well as those caught up in the war in Ukraine. Did you know the In Pensioners have also been fundraising to help those in Ukraine, even giving refuge to a Ukrainian family?

At the end of the parade the In Pensioners all removed their headdress and there was three rousing cheers for their Founder, King Charles II, three cheers for our Most Gracious Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II and finally 3 cheers for Sir Timothy Laurence (3rd place again, but at least he's consistent!).

At the end of the Celebrations many joined the In Pensioners, family and friends for lunch or wandered around the Chapel and the obligatory visit to the gift shop (I managed to liberate a RHC teddy who is currently living it up in Derbyshire, he's even partial to marmalade sandwiches!).

I tried for 10 years to get a ticket, was it worth the wait? You bet it was! I loved every minute and if they lower the entrance requirements I'll be in like a shot - you have been warned Royal Hospital Chelsea! Thank you for having me and all the representatives of the WRAC Association. See you soon.

Marie Smedley

HOLIDAYS FOR HEROES JERSEY

Early in this new year Nicky Murdoch kindly shared an email, with supporting information, that she had received in relation to the above scheme which included the following:

"I am not sure whether you are aware of a charity called HELPFORHEROESJERSEY. It is a separate charity nothing at all to do with H4H and the main aim of this charity is to give veterans who have been physically, mentally or suffered both traumas whilst serving and have been medically discharged from the service within Her Majesty's Armed Forces, a free holiday.

This also allows the wives or husbands of these service personnel and all children under the age of 16 years to go on a free 7-day holiday all-inclusive of accommodation, meals etc which includes travel as well to the island of Jersey compliments of HFORHJ.

I attended one such holiday with my wife in Sept 2020 and what and how we were both looked after by this charity was so brilliant it was unbelievable; this was accomplished by the director Mr. Richard Harwood and his team."

Information on who might be eligible, how you get nominated for such a holiday and what you might expect and receive on such a holiday is available from their website: <https://www.holsforheroesjersey.com/>. Please fully read all tabs on the website before applying.

The basic, but strict, criteria for applying is:

This is for Veterans, their spouses, and/or carers of UK ARMED FORCES VETERANS, and includes their children up to the age of 16 YEARS maximum. This is a strict ruling laid down by the committee which you are required to abide by to be accepted for a free Holiday.

You have to have been injured whilst in military service and can back this fact with official documents, whether the injury is physical, mental or combined. To put it bluntly if you have served Army, Navy, Royal Air Force, or Royal Marines, including of course WRAC, QARANC etc, and you meet the criteria that you must be injured as a result of your Military Service whilst serving, and you have documentation from your unit / MOD discharging you from your military service as injured, and / or you are in possession of P.I.P / War Pension issued by a War Tribunal / DWP etc for injuries sustained whilst serving, you can apply.

Please be aware – If your injuries were sustained after you left the Service (eg you were involved in a car accident not as a result of your Military Service and you sustained injuries whether mental or physical) it will not count, SO YOU CANNOT APPLY. The charity is sorry, but it must draw the line somewhere.

If you feel this is something you could benefit from please contact the charity, Association Office or mention it to a SSAFA or RBL representative. Please be aware, they do not offer holidays every week of the year, rather on selected dates across the spring and early autumn. All the spaces available for 2022 are fully booked but applications will open towards the end of this year – so keep an eye on their website.



ATS & WRAC Association Benevolent Fund

Making A Difference

BENEVOLENT FUND NEWS Julie Winks, Benevolent Fund Secretary

Whilst many of you will be recovering from the impact of Covid 19 and the various restrictions on your lives in the last few years, as a nation we are now facing other difficulties. Foremost in the Benevolent Fund's focus is the soaring energy prices and the extra financial pressures this will cause, especially for those already living on low incomes or in receipt of benefits.

"Heat or Eat"

According to Age UK in Dec 2021, around 150,000 older people are likely to be plunged into fuel poverty due to soaring energy prices. Among them are female Army veterans who served their country, but are living on minimal incomes, unable to make ends meet. A 2014 survey by the British Legion found that 2 out of 10 ex-Service personnel had turned the heating down or off, despite it being too cold. This proportion is likely to rise exponentially, following 1st April's energy cap price increase and further rises predicted for October.

Women veterans, in particular, are struggling. In 2018 the Association's "Review of Information on Societal Trends influencing the Strategic Direction of the WRAC Association" showed ex-service women, specifically those currently in their 60s are at high risk of falling into poverty. Some women who served before 1992 had to leave due to marriage or pregnancy and therefore did not have the opportunity to have a pension. Many such women who served their country will be forced to choose, 'heat or eat', very soon.

So what can the Benevolent Fund do to assist those affected? In February 2022 the Trustees agreed the immediate payment of a Fuel Crisis Payment of £100 to be awarded to all beneficiaries that are currently in receipt of a regular charitable payment. The Benevolent Fund is able to assist with priority debts but those facing financial difficulties are urged to seek assistance before debts are accrued so that the Benevolent Fund can help relieve their stress. Several types of recurring grants to help make ends meet are available for those on a State Pension, living on a low income or unable to work through no fault of their own. A Ben Fund Support Supplement is also available which can be used to cover income shortfalls arising from delays in receiving state benefits or a short-term loss of salary. Please see details on how to apply for help below or do not hesitate to contact me, Julie Winks, on 0300 400 1992 for an informal chat or advice, alternatively drop an email to benfund@wraca.org.uk. More information on regular charitable grants is also available on our website www.wraca.org.uk.

Meeting Members

It was lovely to meet so many members and beneficiaries at the Grand Reunion in Leeds earlier this year. I found it a great opportunity to chat informally about how members can help to promote the Benevolent Fund and in turn how we can help our former servicewomen. If you know of anyone in need of assistance please do not hesitate to contact me on the above details. Additionally, if you know of a local club or noticeboard where an A4 poster could be placed to promote the Benevolent Fund please let us know. Sometimes it is word of mouth or a friendly prompt that encourages someone in need to make contact.

Also at the Grand Reunion it was lovely to meet two of our members helping other women through crises. Both ladies are volunteers at SSAFA Salford with Denise Calladine as Treasurer and Glynys Horton the Divisional Secretary. You can read more about their lives in the Benevolent Fund stories following this report.

Membership Support Grant

The Membership Support 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 Membership Support Grant Request form and provide evidence of costs/use of grant.

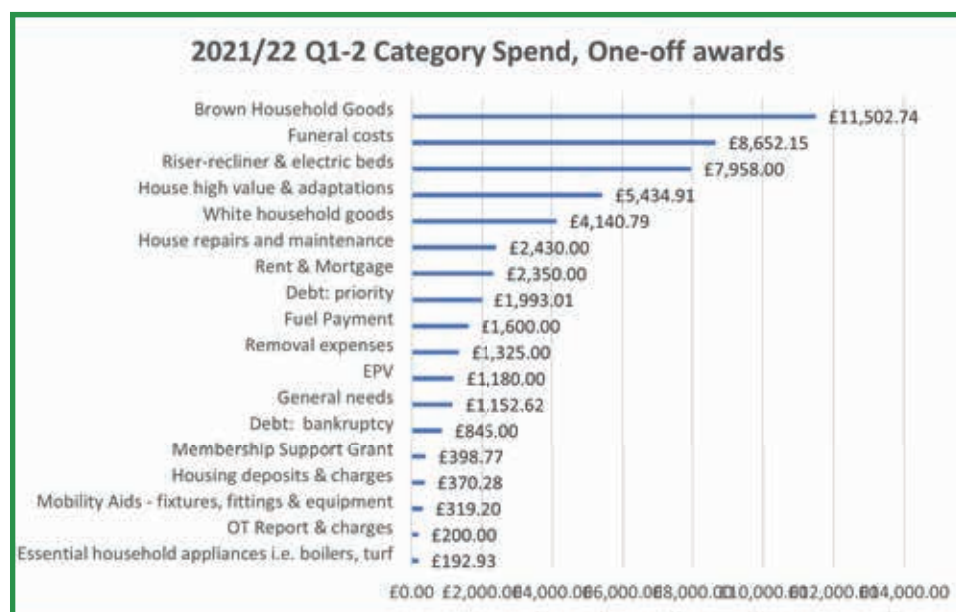
For more information and details on how to apply please contact Julie Winks, Benevolent Fund Secretary on 0300 400 1992 or alternatively please email to: benfund@wraca.org.uk.

BENEVOLENT FUND GRANTS

The ATS & WRAC Benevolent Fund continues to be fully operational with staff now based back in the offices in Winchester. There has been an upturn in requests for assistance as caseworkers are able to work with less restrictions. Key facts on awards made during the first six months of this financial year can be found below.

Key Facts FY 21/22 Q1-2

- 104 applications for assistance were considered by grant committees.
- 82 awards were granted across 18 categories.
- 11 PRMF AMG Annuitants, 3 PRMF AMG Overseas Annuitants and 4 Ben Fund AMG Annuitants.
- 10 Care Enhancement Grants awarded, 8 were for Nursing Home Fees and 2 for Care at Home.



A SSAFA Caseworker wrote: "I am writing this email to express my thanks and gratitude for pledging help to our client, I know the family will be relieved that some of the worries are being covered".
£2,600 Nursing Home Top Up Fees.

Benevolent Fund Delegated Financial Authority for Grants:

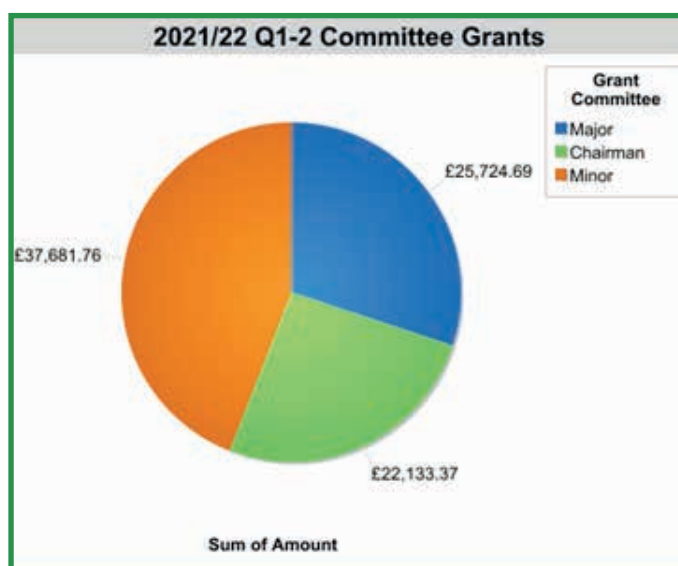
Minor Grants Committee – up to £2,000.

Chairman Grants Committee – up to £3,000.

Major Grants Committee – up to £6,000.

Trustees – above £6,000

The total spend for the first six months of this financial year across all committees totalled £85,539.82.



"I would like to thank you for your help in being able to purchase these items, they have now been fitted into my kitchen, and owing to my disability, they are a God send. Once again, I cannot thank you enough".
£389.98 white goods.

BENEVOLENT FUND GRANTS

Are you or do you know a former ATS or WRAC servicewoman in need of assistance? Do you know how the Benevolent Fund can help?

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:

funeral costs	respite breaks	Furniture
bathroom adaptations	travel and transport	white goods
house adaptations	priority debt	removal expenses
electric wheelchairs/mobility scooters	house repairs	rent, deposits and bonds
riser-recliner chairs	central heating/boilers	food vouchers
stair-lifts	carpets and flooring	general needs
disability aids including electric beds	clothing	

Regular Charitable Payments?

There are a number of different types of Annual Maintenance Grants (AMG) to help with day-to-day living expenses or nursing home care fees. See our website for more details www.wraca.org.uk

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 STORIES

Caroline Devine's Story: The WRAC Association Benevolent Fund Helped me after my house burned down

Caroline's life was filled with adventure and fulfilment, but in 2013, her house burned down, and she lost everything except the clothes on her back. The WRAC Association Benevolent Fund helped Caroline be able to refurnish her new home.

Caroline joined the Women's Royal Army Corps having been inspired aged 14 or 15 by talks given at school by officers. She'd lived in Glasgow, but moved to The Borders, where she became bored by living in such a quiet area. This spurred her to make the decision to join up: "One of the things on my bucket list," says Caroline, adding, "Would I do it again? Without a doubt... YES!" Her biggest challenge was moving to England, away from her family in Scotland: a huge culture shock as she didn't know a soul. Being apart from her family was difficult, but she notes, "It's either do or die... and I did it." Caroline joined the Women's Royal Army Corps (WRAC) aged 19 in 1979, and embarked on 6 weeks' training in Guilford, Surrey.

She was made to feel comfortable by her colleagues as they were 'all in the same boat,' becoming her "extended family who all looked out for one another". They treated each other like sisters: if one lady was an excellent shoeshine and another was skilled at ironing shirts, they would use their own skillset to help each other out, banding together.

She completed her trade training at Blackdown Barracks in Deepcut, for the Royal Army Ordnance Corps, which retained repair responsibilities for ammunition, clothing, and certain ranges of general stores in the supply area. After this intensive training, Caroline was sent on her first posting at Central Ordnance Depot, Donnington (Shropshire) - one of the largest military store complexes in Europe, situated to



TWO SALFORD LADIES HELPING OTHER WOMEN THROUGH CRISES Denise Calladine's Story:

Salford-based Denise Calladine's life has been filled with many adventures and challenges. Denise had an unsettled childhood and a difficult relationship with her parents. Her teenage years were a struggle, and she spent around 4 years planning to leave home before deciding to sign up for the army aged 19. She didn't tell anybody in her family of her application until it was finalised, and she left a fortnight later.

Joining the army was the best thing she ever did, and it quickly became like a family to her. Her colleagues were much more than just friends or colleagues, the army became her home. It will be 50 years since Denise joined up this year, and she remains close friends with people she served with: "You may not see them in a while, but the minute you do, it's like you're back there. There's no barriers."



She initially intended to be a driver, but was sadly deemed too short, however to her surprise, her tests revealed an aptitude for maths, and she was put forward to join the Experimental Assistants in Gunnery (EAG). She was stationed at Horseshoe Barracks, Shoeburyness near Southend on Sea, where she served for 4 and a half years, attached to The Royal Artillery at The Proof & Experimental Establishment at Shoeburyness near Southend on Sea. From a young age, Denise's life revolved around sport, and being able to play Badminton in the Interservices Team, was a real highlight for her. She was also heavily involved in plenty of other sports during her time, and represented the Unit in - hockey, tennis, squash, rounders, skiing- sailing you name it!

Denise recalls her time serving with great fondness, but her biggest challenge was coming to terms with her sexuality. Homosexuality was outlawed in the army at the time, and Denise endured a personal struggle to resolve her sexuality in her own mind. She didn't know anyone else who was gay, and it took her until her 50s to fully accept it. She affirms it has made her who she is today, and she is now happily married to her wife, Carolyn.

LIFE AFTER THE ARMY

When she left the army, Denise initially found the transition to civilian difficult. For that reason, she joined the Territorial Army (TA), which she loved. It was great being treated as a soldier again - there was no distinction between men and women. Denise served with the WRAC TA for 4 years attached to The Royal Corps of Signals, as a Communications Centre Operator, getting to travel all around the UK and also to Gibraltar and Germany. She left the TA to train to become an accountant, and now is the treasurer of SSAFA Salford Division.

HELPING OTHERS VIA THE WRAC ASSOCIATION



Denise was living in Leicestershire when she decided to join their branch of the WRAC Association. It was her first time she'd moved home to the Midlands since being in the army. She was going through some personal difficulties, and felt the need to be with her 'sisters', for support. She's met some lovely people, who she still sees regularly. Her proudest moment was marching in London for Remembrance Day with her WRAC sisters. She says to all women thinking about joining: "Becoming a member helps us keep in touch with other women who have come through that same journey. You have a special bond - you never need to feel on your own."

She is now living in Lancashire, and her work with SSAFA has also meant she's seen first-hand what the WRAC Association Benevolent fund can do. Meeting people from all circumstances and walks of life, Denise finds it rewarding to make a difference: "Especially since working with SSAFA - it's been over 2 years now - the Benevolent Fund is invaluable. There are so many sitting at home right now, especially with the cost of living going up, that are struggling to manage, because they don't know, or they forget what support is available. Veterans only have to have served for just 1 day to qualify."

Denise encourages all women veterans to become a member of the WRAC Association and enjoy the support and camaraderie the organisation has to offer.

the north of Donnington. As a member of the Ordnance Corps, Caroline was given three options of where she could be posted: Donnington, Didcot or Kineton. Kineton was where a lot of the ammunition was stored, but Caroline never went there. She was also sent to Bicester, where she was tasked with providing uniform to troops - wherever they were! While posted here, she was sending sleeping bags and machinery parts to soldiers in the Falkland Islands and Northern Ireland.

She was a Senior Private, just beneath the rank of Lance Corporal. She also sat on the committee for the ROAC (Royal Army Ordnance Corps) and organised activities such as hockey every Saturday and occasional bike rides. Over Christmas, she would work on the dinner in the Sergeants Mess to make some extra money.

During her time serving, she would give officers training to prepare for serving in Northern Ireland with their regiment, teaching them 'crowd control' (how to control, disperse and arrest a chaotic crowd of civilians). She would sometimes pretend to be a civilian, taunting her colleagues by throwing stones and rocks from buildings while they were passing in tanks, helping build their operational flexibility. On one occasion, she was on her own, targeting the tanks, when an officer with a trained police dog let it slip from his grip. The dog began to run at her! She just made it over a 6-foot wall before the dog attacked! Other notable stories of her time serving included the day Caroline had to take part in a scenario in which officers were looking for ammunition hidden in a post office. Caroline played the role of an IRA search unit, during which she was 'padded out' to look like she was pregnant, having been told to act like she'd gone into labour to cause a scene!

She was discharged on family grounds in 1982, when the Falklands War had just started. Caroline's best memory of her time in the charity is of the comradeship, which is remarkable, and she remains in contact with numerous other WRAC Association members.

Glinys Horton's Story:

Prestwich based Glinys joined the Women's Royal Army Corps (WRAC) on 19th January 1968 and served for 9 years until 1977. She had looked at all the job options at the recruiting office on Fountain Street, Manchester, and initially, she fancied being a Military Policewoman.

Glinys completed her WRAC training in Guilford with 1 Company in just six weeks. Following assessment, she was told to investigate 'A trades', either as an analyst in the Intelligence Corps, or an EAG. Glinys ended up with the EAG (Experimental Assistant in Gunnery) and was sent to Shoeburyness, near Southend-On-Sea. As it was, she spent six months in the Holding and Drafting Company, and was then sent to the RA Experimental Ranges at Ty Croes on Anglesey, North Wales.



The camp was a punishment posting for the Royal Artillery, so it was full of lively characters, some who were now privates, but had been corporals, sergeants and staff sergeants who'd been demoted for various misdemeanours! There seemed to be an inquiry most days into what had happened the night before in the NAAFI (Navy, Army, and Air Force Institutes: an organization providing canteens, shops, etc, for British military personnel at home or overseas): "It was quite an introduction and education to my military career!" notes Glinys.

Glinys was called up for duty on July 1st 1969 at the Investiture of The Prince of Wales Caernarfon Castle due to her Welsh background. There were 20 WRAC, 20 WRENS and 20 WRAF girls who were billeted for a week at a school in Caernarfon. During her time in Wales, she was on parade at Feredo, a car part manufacturer, where the Royal Family disembarked from the Royal Train, and were taken to the castle by carriage. When the Duchess of Kent (then, the Controller Commandant of the



WRAC) passed and waved, all 60 ladies cheered, screamed, jumped, and waved in response, much to the disdain of the male Sergeant Major!

Curfew was 11pm, so Glinys would make sure to be back on time and sign in. She would then climb through her bedroom window and go back out with other ladies! It was there that Glinys was promoted to Lance Corporal. She then went on to be stationed at Ty Croes, where she worked on the 5 inch missiles; Thunderbird, Swingfire, Blowpipe and Rapier.

Her job was to test the missiles and train the troops at firing camps. After three years, Glinys was promoted to be a full Corporal. When Ty Croes was closed, the EAGs were sent to Larkhill, and the Radar Operators to the Outer Hebrides. Glinys was always involved in sports, and formed a WRAC Darts Team. Whilst at Ty Croes she discovered sailing - a real novelty for a Mancunium city girl! Glinys was on every single WRAC sports team!



In 1972, while posted in Larkhill, the power cuts started. It was November and temperatures were freezing. The Army agreed for the WRAC to use extremely restricted power so that local businesses could keep going. The use of electricity for floodlights, heating shops, offices and restaurants was banned, the speed limit was slashed to 50mph to save fuel, people were told to bathe together, television was turned off at 10:30pm, and the 3-day week started. She notes, "If you were in the NAAFI when the lights went out, you grabbed your pint and your boobs because anything could happen!"

After Larkhill, the entire section was posted to RA Ranges, Benbecula, Outer Hebrides, which looked out over the Lady of the Isles Statue and the Atlantic Ocean. Glinys despised this posting, was homesick and isolated. But the work was never dull and she had 2 offices, one of which was on the missile firing range in an armoured vehicle and the other in the range head. One day, the brigadier came round and said, 'You're homesick aren't you, Sergeant Horton?' to which she replied, 'Yes sir.' So he sent Glinys home for a fortnight's unpaid leave. After this, The Duchess of Kent visited, and Glinys



had the honour of showing her round the Ranges, where HRH spoke to every member of the WRAC.

It took Glinys exactly 12 months to get off the Outer Hebrides, and she was then posted to Shoeburyness, accompanied by one of her friends, Corporal Jan Baker. Glinys tested heavy weaponry, which she hadn't experienced previously. One morning, at high tide, some 15-year-old shells from Singapore were fired out to sea. Glinys and Jan were instructed to pick up all the pieces to be analysed, to see if the heat had affected their performance. Having not seen a shell before, they were unaware the rounds were live, and decided to pick them up! "We got a right telling off, but as I kept telling them, it was the first shell we had ever seen."

Glinys's mother fell ill after 2 years at Shoeburyness, and she decided to leave the Army.

LIFE AFTER THE ARMY

In May 1977, Glinys joined the Greater Manchester Fire Service as a Fire Control Operator: "That November, the Fire Service embarked on a 9 week strike, which lasted until after Christmas. I had moved into my first house a fortnight after the strike started, and it completely wiped me out financially. At one point, I did not eat for 4 days as I had no money. Firewomen and Firemen who were married to each other could claim 14 Shillings and 6 pence. I could claim nothing, and when I questioned this at the Social, they said that there was not a clause for a single woman buying a house, and I should sleep on the streets."

After this, Glinys realised she needed more financial stability, and went on to work at North West Gas Board, where she stayed for 5 years. When reading her morning papers, Glinys saw a role as a Prison Officer which she applied for. In 1983, she joined the Prison Service as a NEPO. This was a stressful job, so Glinys eased the pressures by pool playing and line dancing. After retiring from the Prison Service in 2011, she became a volunteer caseworker at SSAFA in Salford. In 2018, she was invited by the Lord Lieutenant of Manchester to attend a garden party at Buckingham Palace, and in 2020, she became the Divisional Secretary at SSAFA in Salford. Having encountered so many veterans from the WRAC through SSAFA, Glinys knew it made sense for her to apply for membership of the WRAC Association. Glinys says, "I am looking forward to being a member, taking part in some events and hopefully making contact with a lot of old friends that I served with over my time in the WRAC."

'In My Day'

From 'Soldier' magazine, October 1974 (cost: 7½p)

I recently cleared out my attic and came across a copy of a 'Soldier' magazine dated October 1974 (yes, I am a hoarder!). As my late husband was a Sapper, we always bought the Regimental magazine, so I can only assume this was lying around in the WO's and Sgt's Mess.

You will see why I kept it (the main article, which is a three-page spread) but as I browsed through I was pleasantly surprised at what coverage we (WRAC) received, and the roles that were taken on by the WRAC personnel condescendingly called 'the girls'-groan!).

Kind regards,
Judy Hasnip
(W/4200051)

[Editor's note: The adverts mentioned here are contained within the 'In My Day' section along with a copy of her Elizabethan Bus Voucher see page 68. Thank you to Judy Hasnip for sharing a copy of Soldier magazine from 1974 with this article on the new WRAC Welfare Assistants. I am sure it will bring back various memories for members – perhaps you recognise some people and/or names.]

WRAC welfare assistants

Enter the guardian angels



EIGHT senior non-commissioned officers in the Women's Royal Army Corps are currently carrying out a pilot scheme in different parts of the country which may revolutionise Army families welfare. If the scheme is successful there could soon be up to 40 WRAC welfare assistants working with housing commandants at home and overseas.

The eight, whose ages vary from 23 to 51, were chosen from 23 volunteers. Their personalities are different, their approaches may be different and they are working in varying environments. On their successes or failures depends the future shape of the welfare assistant scheme.

The introductory course for the new welfare assistants was at the Women's Royal Army Corps College last September. It was followed by a short course at Bristol University and a month's attachment to both a unit families officer and a SSAFA social worker. Then at the beginning of this year the girls took up their posts. **SOLDIER** went to Chatham, Kirton Lindsey and Devizes to see three of them at work.

At Chatham, Sergeant Sandy Bayne is regarded by the housing commandant, Lieutenant-Colonel Johnnie Coombs, as being the "hub of a wheel" with spokes

leading to various military and civilian agencies who can help with problems. He feels that the most important part of her work is that someone in trouble can talk to her in complete confidence.

Sergeant Bayne works for most of the time in civilian clothes and is "Sandy" to her contacts. A forthright and articulate personality, she bristled when asked if being unmarried was a hindrance in advising on marital problems.

"Does a doctor have to suffer from cancer before he can cure it?" she demanded. "Because I am not married I do not have to relate to my own day-to-day life and I am able to stand back and look at the problem. I am not necessarily trying to cure it but the thing I can be is someone for a lonely wife to talk to."

In a garrison area such as Chatham the major problems are often outside the larger units such as 1st Battalion, The Devonshire and Dorset Regiment, although there is close co-operation between Sergeant Bayne and the families officer, Major Bill Fergusson-Edgar. "I also have a lot of people who have no families officer at all—people seconded to other corps, that kind of thing," she says.

While working with civilian welfare workers Sandy feels that her own Army experience and knowledge can often give her an advantage. She has already dealt with scores of cases and has a number of people on whom she calls regularly.

"I have found that the gentler approach is the basic one," she said. "For instance I heard about someone who was keeping a smelly dog. If a man had been marched in and disciplined he would have felt his career was in jeopardy. Now there is no antagonism with the neighbours and the dog has gone."

Seven "welfare clinics" have been set up in married quarters areas throughout the Medway towns and Sergeant Bayne visits each at a set time every week. Her success is apparent and Major Fergusson-Edgar describes the scheme as "one of the biggest leaps forward in the Army family care since housing commandants." Yet with 1500 families it may eventually need several welfare assistants to operate in a busy area like Chatham.

Among Sergeant Bayne's innovations is a temporary fostering list for emergencies such as when a mother is taken off to hospital. Then a foster mother steps in and looks after the children. She chats to mothers about fashion and knitting patterns and sees her role as building up confidence in her so that they will talk to her when they are bored with life. "If I can get them when they are bored they may never become desperate."

She adds: "It's not an easy thing to do to knock on someone's door, even in response to a request for help . . . You can't go at it like a high-class cosmetic saleswoman. Globetrotting soldiers bring back wives from

Sergeant Corrinne Harrison (right) chats to a Service wife in the Devizes market place.



At Chatham, Sgt Bayne has made friends with Mrs Antoinette Trusdale and family.

Left: Sgt Harrison visits Mrs Diana White-law. Her husband is in the Ordnance Corps.



WRAC welfare assistants *continued*

many different backgrounds and with many different customs and traditions, particularly on rearing children. You have to deal with them with diplomacy and tact."

Like Sergeant Bayne and the others, Sergeant Diana Souch works mainly in civilian clothes. The informal approach is encouraged by Major James Adair, families officer for 12 Light Air Defence Regiment, Royal Artillery, with whom she works at Kirton Lindsey, Lincolnshire.

He is a great supporter of the scheme: "I certainly hope to have a WRAC welfare assistant permanently—in fact before she arrived I had already put in a bid to have one. We hope that she will get to know the names of all of our wives and they will get to know her."

Although she is only dealing with one unit of about 300 families, Sergeant Souch has found them very spread out. Some are in quarters at Grimsby 32 miles away to the north-east and others at Newark 36 miles to the south. The rest are scattered throughout the district.

"The main complication of this is that I have to deal with three different sets of welfare and social workers—from Lincolnshire, Humberside and Nottinghamshire."

Sergeant Souch finds Kirton Lindsey a happy station. About 80 families have

fathers who are currently doing a tour in Northern Ireland and she has been to see every wife concerned.

Also active over Northern Ireland has been the youngest of the new welfare assistants, 23-year-old Sergeant Corrinne Harrison, working at Devizes. Her two units are 20 Medium Regiment, Royal Artillery, currently in Northern Ireland for the third summer in succession, and 10 Ordnance Support Battalion whose men are frequently away on exercises.

Lieutenant-Colonel Derek Organ, housing commandant for the area, feels it is often an advantage for young wives, many still in their teens, to be able to talk to a girl of the same age. "She is a young person who thinks the same way as they do."

Sergeant Harrison, whose confidence has boomed since she took on the job at Devizes, says: "I don't think of myself as a guardian angel going out and solving everybody's problems. There are many which I cannot solve—but I may be able to help."

Her area embraces four estates of married quarters, three of them intermixed with civilian housing and including a few Royal Air Force families. Some of the quarters are at Corsham, 17 miles from Devizes.

She takes a keen interest in the military community's affairs and attends wives'

club meetings and coffee mornings. Already she has built up strong contacts with civilian welfare workers in the area.

"The tension and anxiety built up before the gunners went to Ireland and we had problems but no really serious ones."

There are no other girl soldiers in Devizes and Sergeant Harrison lives in a flat in the town. She says that at first the units "were a bit dubious and seemed to think I might be one of those old-fashioned health visitors who went round looking into people's hair."

She tries not to use the sergeants' messes too much as she does not want soldiers to feel that she might report anything they said to other senior non-commissioned officers—"the whole thing is confidentiality."

Among her achievements already is a grocery van which is calling on estates while the husbands are on their Northern Ireland tour. She is also helping with the setting up of a youth club for children of both units.

Clearly for each area the approach has to be different. But each of the eight "guinea pigs" in this experiment is making her own impact in her own way. When the system is reviewed at the end of the trial it appears likely that the Women's Royal Army Corps welfare assistant will become a permanent appointment at camps and garrisons throughout the Army.

The eight new Women's Royal Army Corps welfare assistants pose for a formal photograph at their introductory course at Camberley.





Story by John Walton
Pictures by Arthur Blundell
and Martin Adam

Editor: Sgt Souch Above Right

Sgt Souch (right) in conversation with the CO's wife, Mrs Nell Cross.

Right: Sgt Sandy Bayne gets many calls from wives just wanting to chat.

Below: It's not only politicians who have to kiss babies. Sgt Souch meets children of all ages at wives' coffee mornings.

Below right: Another day, another case. Sgt Bayne on welfare rounds.



BRANCH NEWS

As discussed at this year's Branch Secretaries meeting, within the Grand Reunion, it was reinforced that there is no distinction made between 'formal' and 'informal' branches, nor whether you meet in person or online.

Also, if you organise or co-ordinate a Special Interest Group (whether that be crafting, in-take or leaving years, where you served, what trade or unit you were attached to, sport, a hobby, etc, etc) please let us know – we will happily share that information with other members and help promote your Group, what you do and who to contact for more information and/or to get involved. We are here to help you 'support women who served'.

The most important thing is that you are women 'Supporting Women who Served' – the size or nature of the group matters not.

So that all Area and Branch information is contained in one place we have merged the historical Branch 'Meetings' and Branch 'News'. This means that contact and news information for all / any Areas and Branches will be in this same section. Areas will continue to rotate with each edition so that each Area will, at some time, 'start' the section.

If any branch does not list their meeting details (eg when, where, what, etc) please do telephone or email their contact person, or look them up on social media – as per their request.

Eastern

Area Co-ordinator: Lyn Hatch

Email: eastern.area@wraca.org.uk

Although it is still quiet, slowly the branches are now starting to meet up and a few more events are appearing on the calendar.

In March I joined Colchester Branch for their AGM, their first meeting since the lock down. In my diary already is their annual Seaside Havock on Sunday 17th July at Clacton.

Sunday 15th May saw the dedication of the ATS plaque at the Imperial Hotel, Great Yarmouth, with coffee/tea and pastries served afterwards in the hotel. It was great to catch up with those that supported the event

I am looking forward to joining Wendy Hooton in Bury St Edmunds for Armed Forces Day, promoting and fundraising for the Association. I will be joining my own Branch in August for a BBQ in Knapton.



Lyn Hatch with Joan Awbery

Cambridge

Contact: Jean Farrington
Tel: 01223 503867;

Email – jeanfarrington62@gmail.com;
Facebook – Cambridge Branch WRAC Association

Chelmsford

This branch has now closed

Colchester & District

Contact: Kerry Warnes
Tel: 07763122474;

Email – kerrypam@hotmail.com;
Facebook- WRAC/ATS Veterans of Colchester and Surrounding Areas

Herts/Bucks/Beds

Contact: Chris Barratt 01799 526671;
Email – 78chrisbarrett@gmail.com;
Facebook – WRAC/ATS (Herts, Beds, Bucks)

Norfolk

Contact: Lyn Hatch
Tel: 07929 070665;
Email wracnorfolk@aol.com;
Facebook: WRAC/ATS Veterans Norfolk

Suffolk

Contact: Liz Ives
Tel: 01473 807099 / 07714-259949;
Email – eaissafa@outlook.com

Colchester & District

Heather Savin

At last, I am able to report that we held our first branch meeting for some time on 12th March 2022 at our new venue, the Belle Vue Social Club. It was so good to finally be able to meet face to face, although Vinnie Vincent joined us by telephone link as she was not able to attend in person on the evening. Lyn Hatch, Area Co-ordinator, was able to join us and give us some valuable advice. We got down to business and have some events pencilled in, plus "volunteers" to organise them.

Currently we are planning to hold "Seaside Havoc" on Sunday 17th July which is in the capable hands of Vinnie. Kerry Warnes has agreed (honestly, she did) to arrange an Armed Forces Day celebration which will include a disco and a buffet. Other events still in the planning

stage are a Games Night, Barbecue and a Christmas Bash – further details will be posted on our Facebook page (WRAC/ATS Veterans of Colchester and Surrounding Areas). Needless to say, I plan to add photos to my next report, ones that are suitable to be published that is! Once the business part of the meeting was over, we adjourned to the buffet and had a much overdue catch up.



Once again, several of our members have been regularly attending the Colchester Armed Forces and Veterans Breakfast Club that Kerry organises. We had our Christmas Lunch on 15th December where we had a great meal and raffle. Once again, the Berechurch Arms did us proud. As you can see from the photo, even Father Christmas made an appearance - bet you didn't know he was a veteran! Needless to say, a good time was had by all.



One of our members, Debbie Crowley, married at the beginning of April with various members of the branch attending the evening celebration, which went on long into the night/morning. We wish Debbie and Sean best wishes for a long and happy life together. Thanks must go to Dawn Amey for being the designated driver on the day, it was much appreciated by those of us that she chauffeured.

Via the Not Forgotten Society we received limited invitations to a Buckingham Palace Garden Party that was held on Thursday 12th May. To make things fair, names were pulled out of a hat and a very appreciative group made our way to London dressed in our finery. It was an amazing day and we all felt honoured and privileged to be there. We were able to spot various celebrities, who were very happy to pose for photos. The food was amazing and there seemed to be a never-ending supply. Have to confess that I ate far too

many scones but, in my defence, they were delicious. Fortunately, the weather was kind to us and we were able to stroll around the gardens. The Princess Royal and her husband, Vice Admiral Sir Timothy Laurence were the members of the Royal Family in attendance. The afternoon closed with Beating Retreat by the Royal Marines Band Portsmouth; after which we all made our way home having enjoyed an amazing experience.



Meeting 'Biggins' en-route to the Palace



Outside Buckingham Palace gates

We hope that all fellow members of the Association are keeping well and enjoying the newfound freedom to get out there and meet people. Best wishes to all from Colchester & District.

Norfolk

Lyn Hatch

After a quiet few months we are slowly starting to meet up again. Once a month there is an organised short walk during the week - meeting place, day and time can be found on the Norfolk Facebook page.

Sunday 15th May a few of us attended the rededication of the ATS plaque at the Imperial Hotel, Great Yarmouth. With a cold wind coming off the North Sea our ATS veterans Joan Awbery (101 years old) and Lorna Lansdown (100 years old), supported by their families, arrived to attend the short service lead by Sue Wing. Fiona Gardner welcomed the guests and spoke about the importance of remembering the service of the ATS. During the service Rowena Naile laid a posy of eight roses. With the service over coffees/teas and pastries were served in the Imperial Hotel.



Gt Yarmouth ATS-plaque dedication

To help raise some funds for the event I had got myself sponsored to do a Boxing Day dip but due to Covid all events were cancelled, so early Sunday (15th May) morning Barbara Davies and myself went for a dip in the North Sea.



Sponsored 'Boxing Day' swim

With the summer months approaching Rebecca Bailey has arranged lunch at the Marsh Harrier on Saturday 2nd July and Mary Rezlik will be hosting a BBQ at M.A.D.R.A on Sunday 14th August in Knapton.

East Midlands

Area Co-ordinator:
VACANT

Bradford

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

Derby

Contact: Judy Smith
Tel: 07790 848364
Email: judy.smith4529@gmail.com

Doncaster

Contact: Veronica Hanson
Tel: 01226 714757

East Riding & North Lincolnshire

Contact: Dorothy Mitchelmore
Tel: 07897449920
Email: mydeluxe06@icloud.com

Grantham

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: Janet Mitchell
Tel: 01482 508087
or Janet Marshall TEL: 01482 806799

Leicestershire & Nottinghamshire

When: 13.30 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 3rd Tuesday of the month
Where: Holy Cross Church Hall, Skillingthorpe Road, Lincoln, LN6 7RB.
Contact: Sue Smith
Tel: 01636-671874
Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/Lincoln&District

Lincolnshire

When/Where: Very informal group, meeting as and when commitments allow.
Contact: 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 1st Thursday of the month except January and August
Where: The Benjamin Huntsman (Wetherspoons), Cambridge Street, Sheffield
Contact: Brenda Colley
Tel: 01709 365828

York

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

East Riding & North Lincolnshire

Dorothy Mitchelmore

Hello ladies. It feels like such a long time ago I put pen to paper. Apologies to all, I must have blinked as I missed the last deadline. Anyway, here's hoping this will make it. One has to ask one's self where does our time go? It is only when I look at the photos of some of our branch events that I realise how fast the year has gone.

Some of our ladies had a nice little break in Leeds during the summer of 2021. We had a fabulous evening at a casino and a delicious dinner. We spent a fun filled couple of hours playing the roulette table and although we didn't come away as winners no one spent a penny either. Win win I'd say.

Our usual trip to Bridlington was fun, and as I write this I know we are due to repeat this trip in a few weeks' time. It is always such a giggle with this bunch.

Dinner Club did not disappoint. We had encouraged our Nicky Hebblewhite to join us for the first time. All I know is she loved it and will be back. We had a lovely meal in a nice Italian restaurant on the Friday night. Some of our ladies did a spot of retail therapy on the Saturday whilst Ann Stack and I did our usual thing chilling by the swimming pool.



November was busy with Remembrance weekend and, as usual, I joined many of our WRAC ladies in London to pay our respects. We also decided to invite our partners for an early Christmas dinner and an overnight hotel stay. Once again we tried our luck on the roulette table bearing in mind that the dinner deal meant the casino gave us a £5 chip to play with included in the price. We had another fabulous meal and this time we all pooled our chips together and ended up winning £15 each. Not bad for nothing.

We held our first meeting of the new year at the Rose & Crown to plan our calendar for the coming year.

Some of our ladies were attending the Grand Reunion in Leeds and after many, many ideas put forward we decided that we would enter into the spirit of things and go as Pink Ladies from the movie Grease. I have to say that we did have fun leading up to the event.

April saw us gather to try our hands at indoor golf at the newly opened Lost City Adventure Golf. This was a really fun afternoon and such a laugh.

Leicestershire & Nottinghamshire

Chris Corker

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We ended 2021 with a Christmas Lunch which was well attended by 21 members. We also welcomed Sue Goodes and Kath De Lahoye from Grantham, and Lorri Weights from Peterborough.

On December 2nd the Daily Express ran an article entitled "Your country needs Sue ... and Daphne, Barbara and Vera, too". Vera Waddington is a member of the branch, and her account reveals that she joined the ATS after a bomb nearly missed her home in Saltash, Cornwall. She was graded A1 after her medical and was selected for specialised work on one of Britain's many anti-aircraft sites with AA Command. Assigned to work on a Predictor machine which estimated the bearings of enemy aircraft, Vera was at the cutting edge of technology in an era before computer programmes when "non-combatant" girls were guiding the anti-aircraft guns. Vera remembers "You could hear the shells going up. You could put a plane off course just by firing and yes, you could hear the shrapnel coming down. Some of our girls got hit but we were young and foolish, and I suppose we never thought of it at the time, and it never occurred to me that I could get killed or anything." At the time of this article Vera was 99 years old.



This year is going to be a busy one for the branch compared to the previous two -
January 10th: We opened the year with 10 members present and future events were discussed over tea/coffee and cakes.

February 8th: 15 members in attendance. Decision taken to hold a Platinum Jubilee Lunch on 8th June.

March 8th: 16 members present. Sandra Smith finished her talk on the life of our previous Chairman Doris White. What a fascinating life this lady led.

April 12th: numbers increasing as the weather improves with 18 members. A successful Bring and Buy was held, which always raises funds for the branch.

May 17th: 12 members. Sadly, the Dogs Trust speaker was unable to attend so we spent the time, as ladies do, with plenty to talk about. Final plans were laid for the Platinum Jubilee Lunch. Lyn Wenham attended the funeral of Ada Trotter. Our Vera (of the above article) was 100 years old.



May 21st: 6 members attend the fund raising at ASDA Fosse Park courtesy of Debby Kenny. Even during this trying times the public were very generous.



May 24th: Members and friends went for lunch at Fosse Way Bowling Club in Syston where again Debbie took charge of their super dishwasher. Everyone enjoyed the buffet lunch.



June 8th: The Platinum Jubilee Lunch was well attended, and we welcomed as our special guest Brigadier (Retd) Fiona Gardner OBE, the Association Vice President. Also present were 3 ATS ladies Vera Waddington 100 years old, Vi Rawlins 96 years old and Lillian Hollis 95 years old. A lovely buffet was provided by Devonshire Place and as you will see from the photos it was enjoyed by all. After saying a few words to the Branch Fiona presented each of the ATS ladies with a beautifully engraved lantern courtesy of Cathy Munro MBE and she also received one to say thank you.

We wish all members of the Association a wonderful summer and hope you all stay well and healthy.





North West

Area Co-ordinator:

Dawn Hawker

Contact: northwest.area@wraca.org.uk

Bury & Rochdale

When: 2nd Tuesday of the month
Where: The Old White Lion, 6 Bolton St
Bury, BL9 0LQ
Contact: Pat Oldham
Tel: 0161 761 7926

Also:

Informal Evening Meeting 3rd
Wednesday of the month
Contact: Susan Feeney on
07813 313508
or Kath Kirtley on 07910 925070

Chester

When: 13.00 2nd Monday of the month
Where: Chester Military Museum, The
Castle, Chester, CH1 2DN
Contact: Pat Sanders
Tel: 07733 270567

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 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
Where: At the Walton Fox, Bamber
Bridge, Preston
Contact: Gail Newsham on
07939 505485
or Email gaildki@talktalk.net

Where: The Cosy Club, 53 Albion St,
Leeds, LS1 5AA (except January)
Contact: Jayne Maitland
Tel: 07904-084491
Email: jayne849@msn.com

Liverpool

When: 12noon, 1st Wednesday monthly
Where: The Holiday Inn, Lime St, LN1
1NQ (opposite the station)
Contact: Pat Brown
Tel: 0151 724 5966 / 07896-486171
Email: pat-br@hotmail.co.uk

Manchester

When: 11.00 2nd Sunday of the month
Where: The Swinging Bridge, Trafford
Boulevard, Trafford Park, M41 7JE
Contact: Pip Flegel 07375-095532
Email: pipflegel2009@gmail.com

Oldham

When: 19.00/19.15 3rd Thursday of the
month
Where: Different restaurants – phone for
details
Contact: Kath Kirtley 07910 925070
kathleenkirtley@gmail.com
or Susan Feeney 0781 3313508
susan4michael@yahoo.co.uk

Wirral

When: 19.00, 3rd Tuesday each month
Where: TA Centre, Chetwynd, Wexford
Road, Oxtown, Birkenhead, L43 9TF
Contact: Sharon Broderick MBE (Chair)
Tel: 07784-068826
Email: sharonbroderick139@sky.com
Jean Hayes (Secretary)
Email: Hayes_3000@yahoo.co.uk

Manchester

Pip Flegel & Lieann Andrew

Three years ago (pre Covid) WRAC
Association Manchester Branch received
an invitation to The Not Forgotten
Association Buckingham Palace
Garden Party (they provide events for
wounded serving personnel and disabled
veterans). So imagine our surprise when
invitations dropped through the letterbox
in 2022. Unfortunately by then we had
lost one of our Lionesses, Anne Leyland,
but she was with us in spirit.





Meeting Gloria Hunniford



Meeting Jonathon Foulkes,
HRH Princess Anne's chauffeur



Manchester at GR22

I was recently given the honour of having a military room at the Headquarters of the Defence College of Logistics, Policing & Administration (DCLPA) in Worthy Down, Winchester, home of the Royal Logistics Corps & Adjutant General's Corps named after me.

It was a huge honour & I was invited to officially open the room as guest of honour. It was an amazing day, accompanied by my family, (Husband Mark & children Ben & Beth).



DCLPA said "On Monday 25 April 2022 the Defence School of Logistics and Administration were privileged to welcome Lieann Andrew to the opening of the Lieann Andrew Room. The Lieann Andrew Room serves to provide a comfortable space for mothers and mothers to be.

Lieann Andrew was one of the first women not to be discharged from the British Army due to pregnancy.

In 1993, whilst serving in Cyprus, Lieann found out she was pregnant. At this time the Army had no maternity clothes nor policy in place for managing a pregnant Service person. Lieann's experience was ground-breaking; she paved the way for change regarding the development of the policy and process now in place to ensure pregnant women throughout the military are managed and provided for in a professional and inclusive way. The Lieann Andrew Room is symbolic of the continuous improvement to the many support mechanisms being provided across defence.

"From serving mothers and serving mothers-to-be, thank you Lieann for leading the change; we continue to follow in your footsteps and extend the journey."

I was described as a trail blazer for my part in being one of the first woman to be pregnant & remain in the forces after the rules changed in 1993. I did face many challenges during my first few months of serving & being pregnant, so this honour feels very poignant.

Oldham

Kath Kirtley



We still meet once a month in the evening, but it is now the third Thursday in the month at different venues, so contact Kath Kirtley or Susan Feeney for venue (we normally book beforehand but can always add to the number).



DEBBIE DAVIES at Hartshead Services to commemorate the people killed in the bombing on the M62



ELAINE BROOKS AND KATH KIRTLEY Laying up the Rochdale standard at Rochdale town church it was blessed and a prayer said by the vicar



SUSAN FEENEY, DEBBIE DAVIES,
ELAINE BROOKS AND KATH KIRTLEY
at the Grand Reunion in Leeds

Wirral

Sharon Broderick MBE

It has been a great start to 2022 for the veterans of Wirral & Chester branches of the association. A number of our ladies are members of both branches, and we try to include all veterans in our social events. We are also very lucky to have WRENS and WRAF veterans who also join in the fun.

Despite the hard times over the last couple of years the ladies have been there for each other. We have had WhatsApp groups going, along with our Facebook page. When possible, we have met up for a meal. Thankfully now we are getting back to a more normal life and we are able to meet up properly again. Wirral branch meet every third Tuesday at Chetwynd TA Barracks in Oxton, Birkenhead at 19.00 hours. We also try to go out for a meal every first Wednesday evening of the month, this changes but all are welcome to join in.



Fabulous trip out to see our friends in Shropshire in February. Lots of giggles from the off. We were waving at the wrong cars, spotting the rhinoceros, giraffe and teapots in the trees!!! Don't go there, but I have to say we laughed the whole time we were out.

When the call came to support those in need in the Ukraine, every one of our members were ready to help in any way they could. They all stepped up and sent the essential practical items that were

requested by the appeal. We sent cash and various children's essentials too, with one lady donating toys, highchairs, travel cots and pushchairs.

March saw a number of us attend the Grand Reunion in Leeds. Whenever we go anywhere, we get lost! One year on our way back from Fort William we even managed to lose the Erskine bridge. We swear that our very own Wee Wing Woman (Kathleen Harrison) got her brothers to hide it on us! It must have rubbed off on the bus driver, because he managed to get lost going in and out of Leeds. We also took in the sights at the Royal Armouries. Kathleen Harrison gave this chap a lesson in Japanese warfare!! Seriously though there was lots to see and enjoy in Leeds and it was a very successful and enjoyable weekend.



Finally for our Platinum Jubilee celebrations - Sheila Brown hosted a garden party for the festivities and we all had a ball. We had a special cake baked, and our members cooked, baked and decorated for weeks before hand. There were some tricky quizzes and royal games for the day too. It was a fabulous day and we are all very grateful to Sheila for her hospitality.



North East

Area Co-ordinator:

Lesley Roberts

Contact: northern.area@wraca.org.uk

Area Secretary: **Helen Rowan.**

Tel: 07714-950219

Cleveland

When: 12.30 4th Wednesday of the month

Where: Café Etch, 5 Gilkes St, Middlesbrough, TS1 5ET

Contact: Suzanne Allan

Tel: 07801 571528

Email: s_i_allan@msn.com

Grimsby

When: 14.00 2nd Friday of each month

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

Contact: Gail Davy Tel: 01472 347868

Leeds

When: 12.30 1st Wednesday of the month

Where: The RBL, 73-75 Albion St, Leeds, LS1 5AA

And

When: 11.00 3rd Saturday of each month

Where: The Cosy Club, 53 Albion St, Leeds, LS1 5AA (except January)

Contact: Jayne Maitland

Tel: 07904-084491

Email: jayne849@msn.com

Newcastle

When: 12.00 3rd Thursday of the month

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

Contact: Tanya Hall Tel: 07590 323497

Grimsby

Gail Davy

The Grimsby branch celebrated at the Christmas meeting with mince pies and wine. In February we had a New Year party with all members bringing some food to share - as you would imagine, a good time was had by all.

In March our treasurer, Alyson, also chairman of RBL Healing branch was in contact with a veteran who had reached his 100th birthday, she hoped to receive 100 cards for his birthday. In fact he received over 300 cards, Certificate of Appreciation from the RBL, plus gifts and visits from many VIPS in the county. Well done Alyson.

I could not attend the April meeting, being positive for Covid, but it was just as successful without me (no one is indispensable).

At the end of May 12 members went to the Jug and Bottle pub for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebration lunch. We all enjoyed a tasty carvery lunch followed by a delicious pudding.



Enjoying Queen's Platinum Jubilee lunch

Scotland & N Ireland

Area Co-ordinator:

Helen Jephcote

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

Aberdeen

When: 11.00 1st Monday of the month (except January)

Where: Ma Cameron's (Snug Bar), 6-8 Little Belmont Street, Aberdeen, AB10 1JG

Dumfries

Contact: Susan Marcroft BEM

Tel: 01556 611944

Edinburgh

When: 2nd Saturday of the month

Where: The Scot's Guards Club, Cliftonville Terrace, Edinburgh, over the road from Haymarket Station

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 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 last Saturday of the month

Contact: Liz Dixon Tel: 01786 743635

Ulster

When: Meetings 3-4 times per year

Where: Location varies, please call

Contact: Sylvia Connachan

Tel: 02892 693533 or 07484 142194

Email: conna2312@gmail.com

West of Scotland

Based in / around Glasgow area

Contact: Cathy Philip

Email: catriona223@gmail.com

Stirling

Liz Dixon

Hi Folks. Hope everyone is keeping well and enjoying the down scaling of COVID 19 pandemic!

Stirling Branch is plodding along slowly. Unfortunately, our numbers are dropping and we need a few new members. So, anyone reading this and not a member of a branch please find your nearest and join. Catching up on FaceBook is great but branches will disappear if WRAC members don't join (and there is no substitute for meeting face-to-face and in-person).

Stirling Branch's oldest member is Helen Burness. Helen enlisted in the ATS at Glasgow on 13th September 1944. In her service book it gives her height as 4ft 11 and 5/8, weight 103lbs - so petite. Trade on enlistment was Clerk.



Helen Burness

Helen was posted to Italy and was awarded the Italy Star. In 2005 Helen's granddaughter put her name forward to meet Her Majesty the Queen and she was lucky enough to be selected to represent Scotland (there were other members from the rest of UK). They all met up in a hotel in Windsor and were taken up to the Castle to meet with the Queen. Helen was presented with the Living Legend, 2006 Local Hero Scotland award. Helen still attends as many of Branch lunches as possible.

On the 28th April, Janette Dean and I took a wee trip to Fort William, our aim was to meet up with Marg Davies at the end of The Great Glen Walk. Due to my map reading (phone's fault) we were running a few minutes behind time, had to let the officer take over and Janette found the official finishing point (sorry lassies I let the side down). We saw Marg about 50m away, so I'm shouting "Marg" in my ever so quiet voice, no reaction. Janette is running towards Marg and I'm also trying to phone, but no reaction. At last we got there and met her; I'm waving the Stirling Branch WRAC banner. Grabbing a passing gentleman we politely asked him to take some photos of us all in front of finishing point. We then wandered across to restaurant for a bite to eat and chin wag to hear about Marg's adventures.

Stirling Branch still don't have a regular meeting point, if anyone is in the area and would like to catch up please message me on FB Messenger, under Elizabeth Dixon, and I will get in touch.



Marg Davies with Janette Dean and Liz Dixon

Ulster

Sylvia Connachan

Hello Ladies. We have started off the year slow, as we still had some restrictions. We couldn't have our usual February luncheon, but thankfully that will all change soon.

Marie Jenkins, Chrissy Tolcher and Sylvia Connachan attended the Grand Reunion at Leeds in March. It was a great weekend, meeting up with old and new friends. Thank you to the Association for a memorable weekend.



On the 26th April I attended a training course for Best Practice Good Governance for Veterans. It was held at the NI Veterans Support office, Belfast, and was a very informative day. Thank you Liz Brown for the invite.

The Not Forgotten Association invited our group to a luncheon at The Dunsilly Hotel, Antrim on 7th May. 6 of our ladies attended; they all had a lovely afternoon.



I received my Manchester Run T-shirt from Wendy Hooton and wore it on the Sunday to cheer the runners on. Well done everyone; you were all brilliant.



Via The Not Forgotten Association a few attended the Queen's Garden Party. Our member Joan McCabe is secretary of their branch and attended. They were introduced to Princess Anne, a memorable moment for them. All had an enjoyable time.



My local British Legion are having a fun few days for the Queen's Jubilee. There are a few of our group going to the Queen's Jubilee tea on Thursday 2nd June - looking forward to it. Ladies hope you all have a wonderful summer. Take care. Stay safe.

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

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

Email: 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

Tel: 0034 9658 78963

Mob: 0034 622 036333

Email: melphil@britvegas.com

Perth (Australia)

Contact: Ann Page

ann.page3@bigpond.com

South & South West

Area Co-ordinator:

Amanda Foster

southwest.area@wraca.org.uk

Tel: 07788 316596

Bath

Contact: Sylvia Musgrave

Tel: 01225 339904

Bournemouth

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

Where: Lynton Court TableTable 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: 12 noon 1st Thursday of the month

Where: Contact the branch for details of location(s)

Contact: Judith Stinchcombe

Tel: 07837 455352

Email: wracbristolbranch@mail.com

Isle of Wight

This has now formally amalgamated with Portsmouth branch.

New Forest

Contact: Madge Evans

Tel: 01425 620995

Plymouth

Contact: Jean Cundy-Borge

Tel: 01752 567844

or Evon Roberts Tel: 01752 215780

Portsmouth & Isle of Wight

When: 10.30 1st Saturday of the month

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

Contact: Sally Watson

Tel: 02392-799028

Salisbury

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

Contact: Amanda Foster

email: SalisburyWRACVets@gmail.com;

Facebook: WRAC Salisbury Branch;

Twitter: @SalisburyWRACVets.

Southampton

When: 19.00-21.30 1st Wednesday of the month

Where: Phone for details

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: WRAC Swindon Branch,
WRACSwindonbranch@gmail.com

Rose Kilpatrick 07813 550066

Joy Mutlow 07904 361063

Tina Baker 07795 168503

Torbay & Area

Contact: Pauline Marr

Tel: 07787 763779

Email paulinemarr55@gmail.com

Weymouth & Portland

When: 13.00 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

Winchester

When: 2nd Thursday of January, March, September and November plus a summer outing

Where: Location varies depending on lunch or evening meeting

Contact: Herme Emary
winchester18.wrac.sec@gmail.com

Bristol

Judith Stinchcombe

Although not always busy meeting up with WRAC girls there is a lot going on in the veteran community in the region. Our own branch has a couple of poorly members and knowing how to support them effectively is always a challenge.

A number of us continue to meet regularly, with eating being the most popular choice, although this is twinned with a walk and shopping experience now and again. For those who have not experienced Blaise Castle, it's worth a visit with a long history behind it.



Margaret Angie Belle Pauline Blaise Castle

Three branch members travelled to Leeds this year, having never travelled that far north before myself it was interesting to see how different the architecture is, great to ride the boat to the Royal Armouries Museum, what a treat that was. Thanks to everyone who made the whole weekend go with a buzz.



Impromptu meeting in Leeds



Judith Stinchcombe



Belle and Pauline in Leeds

Breakfast clubs are a great source of information, the networking is second to none, if you need anything locally in the veteran community this is where you will find it, they are growing fast with new venues opening up all the time.

I had the opportunity to march with the Royal British Legion in May, laying a wreath on Whitehall and at the Women's Memorial, a breath-taking sight with over 150 standards. I was also involved in the presentation of the 'Freedom of Entry to the City of Gloucester' in April, presented to the Gloucester City Branch of RBL in recognition of the work the veterans do within the local community. The Veteran Hub has launched a Mental Health programme and Gloucester Rugby club runs a weekly coffee break with use of their gym on occasions, lunch at the RAFA club, so, a great mix to get involved in.



RBL Standards at Women's Memorial, Whitehall, London

There are a number of events coming up for our branch. We meet with the Lord Mayor of Bristol in June to commemorate women who served and gave their lives in WW2, we are to be joined by WRAF and WRENS in the area; this is an annual event and helps to celebrate the Branch Anniversary. Armed Forces Day is very big in the region - we will be represented in Gloucester Quays and in Weston Super Mare. Hotels are booked for the National Arboretum in July and Guildford in November, five Bristol ladies taking the opportunity to join the bigger picture.

Bristol Branch is open to everyone and meets at 12.00 noon on the first Thursday in each month, email or phone for further details.



Judith at 'Freedom of the Entry to Gloucester' presentation to Gloucester RBL

Portsmouth & Isle of Wight

Val Duke

The past few months, since the formal amalgamation with Isle of Wight, have been a little quiet, however, our forthcoming AGM will be the first of the newly formed branch and we hope to use the opportunity to cement plans for the future.

Coffee mornings have continued, followed by luncheons at the Lady Hamilton, joined by IW members. The second of April was a special occasion for the branch as we celebrated



Megan's 90th birthday. Megan is a regular attendee to the branch and the first to have her birthday celebrated within the union of Portsmouth & IW.

Sadly, however, we have had another loss to the branch, that of Di Western who will be greatly missed by all who knew her.

Salisbury

Amanda Foster

Salisbury Branch update since Christmas – slowly but gradually we are getting back to our new normal way of life. The branch has suffered, like others no doubt, with cautious return and I can understand that from our members.

February Bowling. Well like most youngsters (we are still young I think) we thought that a birthday party with cake and drinks around town would be a good idea. So, we were able to celebrate Jane Ricketts' birthday with a Bowling Party which, as I understand, was somewhat extended afterwards around town. There were some pretty good bowling scores as well!

March saw our Salisbury Stroll – a gathering of 8 of us for a couple of bracing hours walking from Larkhill area to view Stonehenge, with lots of chatter and stories and lunch, all with glowing faces. The weather almost played the game, and we ended at the pub with smug satisfaction that we could justify a pint and some good pub grub.

Grand Reunion – What can I say! Alas, like some other branches, we were down on numbers due to the Covid, but small in number large in heart and eagerness to have a good time. We were joined by our Basingstoke attendee Patsy Hyland – you made the weekend even better with your very dry sense of humour. We would share more pictures but feel in order to protect the innocent we should hold on to them for fundraising options in the future. What I can say it was brilliant to see so many ladies enjoying themselves, faces that I remembered from the previous GR19; and we all left with more friends, special memories and the need for a sleep on the way home. Thank you to those that worked so hard to make the event happen.



Funeral in April – we attended the funeral for a Wilton lady, Molly Clarke (101) at Larkhill, and thank you to the ladies that attended, it really did make a very positive impact on the family and

they were grateful. It is unfortunately something that we are all no doubt having to attend more of, but it's important that we are able to pay our respects to such amazing ladies who really did pave the way for others to follow. Only yesterday a number of us attended a funeral for a Breakfast Club Veteran as well.

BP Garden Party – after the cancellation in 2020 we were all rather disheartened but to hear that that was back on brought a skip to all of us, I am sure. Outfits, timings and journeys were all arranged, and we met under the clock at Waterloo along with a few hundred other people – it was brilliant people watching. We were blessed with amazing weather, excellent company and the whole day was just wonderful. Jenny Fiddler, from Salisbury said "I felt honoured to get the invite and wasn't going to miss the day. I loved every minute of it and will look back on the day for many years with immense pride". Patsy, our lady from Basingstoke, also took this in her stride, when at the station she declared "STOP Ladies", adding "OK, you are crockery, you are glass, you are cutlery – and you are the lookout". We all stopped and looked very serious for a few moments until we realised what the allocation was – alas our handbags were not big enough! I have to say that I don't think any of us stopped smiling all day, and despite the very sore feet afterwards and the fact no cabs were close, we were still buzzing when we got off the train to our home locations. Again, a great opportunity to feel proud of our Lioness Pride that we are all part of.



As the year progresses into the summer, we are hoping to have another Summer BBQ, walking tour of Salisbury and also getting ready for the Christmas Party.

We are always looking to extend a welcome to local branches and really hope we can have some AWAY days soon!

Southampton

Jean Doe

Well, here we are again! Although a much smaller group we have managed to hold our monthly meetings. We are so fortunate with our venue, and although small in number members seem keen to keep turning up.

What is now many years ago, I was reading a letter in the Lioness from a lady living in Wales, who was trying to find where her late aunt had lived in Southampton and if anyone could help. The area was close to where I lived and so I sent a letter with some information. A few days later I had a phone call – her name was Barbara Bennett, and she was returning back to the Southampton area, so I invited her to visit us. Her aunt had passed away, but she had served in the ATS and in Europe - an expert in Radar, who was later awarded a King's Citation. Barbara visited the branch and brought all the items and documents of her late aunt, she came and gave help with speakers etc, and introduced us to her friend, who was quite an expert on the SOE. With all this help we had many very interesting talks. We were so lucky, and all of it from reading the Lioness. Sadly for us, Barbara and her partner have moved to Wales, but hope they still visit us.

We had a fish and chip lunch in April which went down very well. We are now looking at a cream tea sometime in June. We don't think about diets!!

Pauline, one of our members loaned me the book 'Army Girls'. One of our former members, Penny Bailey, has about 4 write ups in it, although she sadly passed away just before the book was released. We have shared memories of Penny and her life in, and after, the ATS and was thrilled that Tessa Dunlop was to meet her and for some input into 'Army Girls'. This book was a very and good read! Perhaps libraries stock it.

The signs look good for a hot summer – so let's hope we can all take advantage of the weather; should be good for a trip out or two.

Enjoy the summer.

Swindon

Rose Kilpatrick

It's been a hard time getting people back after the Christmas break, but we're back up and running.

Sadly, we lost one member end of last year - Chris Rosier passed away in January 2022; our thoughts went out to her two girls.

Lydia Lyne and Karen Rosier went to Leeds to the Annual AGM. Betsy Lawton and Yvonne Parsons joined Swindon Wrens on a canal barge trip on the Kennet canal in April. We have been asked to meet up with the Swindon Wrens again in October.

I was nominated by a fellow WRAC Linda Pearce to go to Buckingham Palace Garden Party in May. Wow! it was awesome. I met some lovely celebrities during the afternoon. The food was so great too.

We are hoping to get a trip to the National Arboretum soon. Ten pin bowling and other trips are being planned.



9 ladies with our branch standard, RAFA club in November 2021,



Tina Baker and husband Graham at RBL Stratton bingo night



Jo Milsom having a break from bingo



Canal barge trip, courtesy of the Wrens. Betsy Lawton, Yvonne Parsons and a cream tea



Rose Kilpatrick with Claire and Elaine from Gloucester branch at The Buckingham Palace Garden party

Wales & The West

Area Co-ordinator:

Ann Stack

Email: wales.westmidlands.area@wraca.org.uk

Tel: 07921 832094

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This is my first post for The Lioness as Area Co-ordinator, following in the footsteps of Maggie Purkis and Babs Anderson who established a strong and successful Area. A huge thank you for your enthusiasm and hard work.

Within Wales and The West Area we have 13 Branches who work tirelessly to attract membership, as well as organising get togethers for their local members. This is so appreciated and even more so as it's voluntary and is fitted in between work and personal lives. A massive well done to these very thoughtful and special Lionesses.

I'm very much looking forward to visiting all of the Branches in our Area this year (Phoenix Branch at The NMA was the first and very welcoming) and keeping my fingers crossed that a slice of cake to help my waistline will be available along with a good hot cuppa. Until then, enjoy our Area reports and news and do make a note of the following diary date: Saturday 17th September 2022 - Wales & The West Area Reunion and AGM, hosted by Tamworth Branch. Details of the event have been forwarded to all Branch Leads and it promises to be a great day. Join us!

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Birmingham

When: 11.00 1st Wednesday of the month

Where: Solomon Cutler (Wetherspoons), Broad Street, Birmingham City Centre B1 2DS

Contact: Babs Anderson

Tel: 07921 832094

Email: babs.blay@gmail.com

Cardiff

When: 2nd Tuesday of the month 6pm

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

(Please double check before attending in case of changes)

Contact: Branch Secretary: Deserie Mansfield

Email: WRACCardiff1@outlook.com

Facebook: WRAC Cardiff Branch

Twitter: @WRACCardiff

Colwyn Bay

When: 1300hrs - 1500hrs last

Wednesday of every month

Where: Woody's Lodge, Eirias Park,

Colwyn Bay LL29 7SP

Contact: Linda Goodier

Tel: 07392 729387

Email: goodierlynda@yahoo.co.uk

Dudley

This branch has closed

Gloucestershire

Contact: Frances Fairclough

Tel: 07739-344846

Email: fran.f@btopenworld.com

Ann Stack, anndewnip@hotmail.com

Facebook: Gloucestershire Branch

WRAC.

Hereford

When: 19.00 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 ,please phone

Contact: Carys Palmer

Tel: 01588 640985

Oxfordshire

When: 2nd Saturday each month, 12.30 for lunch

Where: Littlebury Hotel, Bicester

Contact: Christine Townsend

Tel: 07756 681441

Phoenix

This branch has closed

Shropshire

When: 19.00 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

Email: chris.powell3@mypostoffice.co.uk

Tamworth

Contact: Mrs Pat Williams (Chairman)

on pat@williams.cx,

or Chris Whitehead (Secretary) on

chris_wo1@hotmail.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

Tel: 07880 732245

Email janebash@hotmail.co.uk.

Facebook: 'Worcestershire WRAC Group'

Birmingham

Babs Anderson

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Since Covid restrictions have been lifted, Birmingham Branch has been going back to normal - cautiously. Some of our members are still not ready to be travelling into the City Centre for meetings but that doesn't mean they have been forgotten, far from it.

The first thing on our agenda since we last spoke was the annual trip to the pantomime - Oh yes it was. We giggled our way through a couple of hours and promised to do it all again next year. The tickets are already booked and paid for.

Our Branch members were happy to be invited to the Hereford and Shropshire Branches Post-Christmas Lunches. We like to take up those invitations if we can, as we have such a lovely time.

A large contingent of Brum Branch were dancing and singing at the Grand Reunion in Leeds. We all had a fabulous time and can't wait to find out where we are going for the 2025 Grand Reunion.

If you have ever taken part in a Beetle Drive, you will appreciate why the other pub customers were bemused when we started shouting at dice and constantly warning each other to be careful not to knock our drinks over. Nobody has been able to work out how Pat Neale managed to play four games without throwing a 6 to start. She managed to avoid a whitewash though.



Beetle Drive

A bunch of us chocoholics visited Cadbury World in April. Every other year is normal for our visits. Lots of lovely chocolate was consumed and plenty of money spent in the shop. We always wear our fleeces on these occasions and enjoy telling curious members of the public who we are. It's amazing how many times we are approached by other veterans who want to swap a few stories about the times they were posted alongside WRAC.

Quite a few members of Brum Branch managed to drag themselves around the Manchester 10k without injury or incident. It was lovely to meet a few famous faces and chat with other runners. Our WRAC Lionesses did us proud as usual.

By the time I press the 'send' button on this report we will have enjoyed our Birthday/Jubilee Lunch. This year we were joined by the WRAC Association's CEO, Paula Rogers and she appears to have escaped unscathed. Everyone had a great time and a lovely, uplifting sing-along with our entertainer. Roll on December when we can celebrate the opportunity to wear very silly Christmas jumpers yet again.



Exciting times are on our horizon; with a trip to revisit Bletchley Park in June, taking part in Birmingham's Armed Forces Day also in June, joining Hereford Branch at the Royal Mint in Llantrisant in July, and meeting up with other Branches at our Area Reunion, hosted by Tamworth in September.

Remember, you can count on Brum Branch. We have an abacus.

Gloucestershire

Ann Stack

Since the start of 2022 we have gained a further 2 members to our Branch and we now total 63 Lionesses. Our Facebook page has been our main point of contact for the first part of this year and Armed Forces Day in Gloucester on the 25th June will see our next get together as a Branch. We are grateful for the support of Branches outside of Gloucester and we hope to connect more of our Members in person in the latter half of this year.

Thank goodness for social media, which acts as a halfway mark for many of us to keep updated with The WRAC Association events and news, as well as with what is happening locally. However, some of us have crossed over the border to attend functions outside of our very beautiful Shire.

The Grand Reunion in Leeds was excellent and in the true style of all things WRAC, our table was made up of Gloucestershire, East Riding and Bristol Ladies and a wonderful weekend was had by all of us. A Military Band, dancing, delicious dinner, friendship and more set in the wonderful City of Leeds was a winner and the opportunity to dress up in fancy dress too! When we served, we arrived at our postings solo, integrated and made friends, very much like we do today with local and national events. We have a shared history which straight away gives us so much in common!



Six Members of our Branch were honoured to be invited to The Not Forgotten Association Garden Party held at Buckingham Palace. HRH Princess Anne and her husband, Admiral Sir Timothy Laurence represented the Queen. It was a beautiful sunny day and being amongst so many Veterans and Serving Soldiers was a privilege.

Throughout the afternoon we bumped into recognisable faces from television and theatre and whilst many knew of the existence of The WRAC, an equal number didn't which we righted straight away! Again, being part of The Women's Royal Army Corps Association and our local WRAC Veteran's Branch has informed and linked us to additional Veteran Organisations which in turn informs them of our presence.



We are always ready to welcome new members, visit WRAC Veterans and, importantly, bring ideas to make our Branch inclusive and one that we're proud to belong to. Join us and join in with us!

Hereford

Lynda Armstrong

Well, what can I say, another 6 months has flown by, but at least these last 6 months have come with us finally making headway to a new normal.

January 2022 came and, as always, Hereford Branch held its annual Post Christmas Lunch at The Green Man. 26 of our members were able to attend, with a further 18 guests from other Branches and Associations. As always our meal was second to none and it was so lovely to catch up with so many after so long.



Post-Christmas lunch

A few of our members have sadly been in hospital over the past 12 months, including our Chairman Rosemary Jones, one of our ATS ladies Jean Butler and also Sue Richards. Jean is now back home with her daughter and recuperating well even though, in her words, is 'finding everything a bit of an effort.' Rosemary and Sue are now in residential care within Herefordshire and are being very well looked after I'm sure. We all miss these ladies very much, but we wish them all well.

February saw the restart of our monthly meetings and a very good start to the year with 17 members present. Also in February, Alison Brown, a member of Hereford Branch, attended Windsor Castle to collect her OBE from The Princess Royal, Princess Anne. Many Congratulations Ali, from us all.



Ali Brown with her OBE, February 2022

In March, like everyone else, we made our way to Leeds for our Grand Reunion. What an amazing weekend. Everyone seemed to have such a wonderful time. Babs and I even had the lovely Betty Webb up dancing.



Lynda Armstrong, Betty Webb MBE Legion d'Honneur & Babs Anderson - GR22 Friday night



Diane Bradley, Lynda Armstrong, Gwen Jackson, Naomi Burdon and Maria Clark at GR22 Saturday night



Heather Bradbury at The Grand Reunion



Sheila Johnson and Naomi Burdon arriving for The Grand Reunion at Leeds



Alison Brown and Mary Woollard at the Grand Reunion Queens Hotel, Leeds

We again, as a Branch, were invited in May to The Hereford and Worcester Grenadier Guards Centenary afternoon tea, held in Smite Worcester. 9 of us took up this kind invite and, as always, had such a lovely afternoon.



Miriam Unwin and Jane Griffin-Ash, at The Grenadier Guards Centenary Worcester



Dawn Major, Joyce Nicholls and Liz Starbuck at The Grenadier Guards Centenary



Jane Griffin-Ash and Gillian Bastin

Our very own Marg Davies again completed another of her 100-mile walks - this lady never fails to astound me with her continuation of raising these much-needed funds for both cancer charities and The Association. Thank you Marg.



Marg Davies on her 100 mile walk



Hereford Monday Walkers. Marg Davies, Jane Griffin Ash, Elaine Smith, Barbara Davies and Ali Brown

Last weekend (May) saw a large group of us ladies go up to Manchester for the 10th annual 10km run/walk. Over 40 ladies participated in the town of Manchester while others took part in their local areas. All photos are throughout this magazine. Well done to everyone once again.

A couple of ladies have joined our Branch this past year, Gillian Bastin and Pam Murray. We welcome these ladies and always look forward to seeing them at our Branch meetings.

Coming up in the next few months:
2nd July - I've arranged a trip for us all to visit 'The Royal Mint' in Llantrisant - at the moment 26 ladies and 1 man (Sue Walton's dad Ken) from both Hereford and Birmingham Branches. Photos to follow in the next Lioness.
17th July - Mary Woollard is finalising details for our Veterans Summer Lunch to be held at The Green Man, Fownhope.

6th August - Joyce Nicholls has in hand the organisation of our annual picnic at Queenswood Park. This is such a lovely day, so well organised, and enjoyed by many other ladies from other Branches.

Then in September - Wales and The West area will be in Tamworth for their AGM 2022 courtesy of Tamworth Branch.



Lynda Armstrong, George Armstrong, Babs Anderson and Lynn Anderson off to Buckingham Palace for The Not Forgotten Garden Party. What an amazing day we all had

Marches & Mid-Wales

Elaine Smith

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In the past 7 months we have gone from strength to strength. We are currently at 22 members strong (on paper), gaining 7 new ones and losing one.

We were very sad to lose Joan Lake on 9 February this year. She and her husband Tommy had been staunch supporters of our branch, travelling up from South Wales for our meetings, usually with both Kathleen Hughes (RIP) and Cordelia Harding in tow and she was also a dedicated supporter of The Royal British Legion, often travelling to London for the Remembrance Parade. Joan's service was held on 4 March 2022 and there was a great representation from the WRAC Association members including two of our own, Gill Turner and Carys Palmer who made up part of the Guard of Honour. Joan and Tommy will be sadly missed. Thank you Margaret Davies for the article on Facebook.



November 2021: Deanna and her group of poppy sellers managed to raise £14,213.14 for the Poppy Appeal, which was a welcome total compared to the previous year's total of just over £8,000 due to Covid restrictions. Various

members performed the honour of laying wreaths at their local cenotaphs, whilst Carys regularly tends the War Grave of Cpl Mary Agnes Wheeler ATS who died on 11 Jan 1946.



Deanna and Poppy Appeal



Remembrancetide

17th November - We had our pre-Christmas Lunch and Branch meeting at The Lakeside, Garthmyl, and were joined by 2 new members, Pat Cooper (from Hereford) and Gee Barrowclough. It was also great to see Tor Ashby who, due to work commitments, finds it difficult to attend our weekday meetings, and Chris Williams our QARANC member. Since meeting Gee our feet haven't touched the ground. Gee works for Powys Age Cymru and alongside The Veterans' Foundation. More on that later.

December 2021: Our post-Christmas lunch and meeting at the Elephant and Castle, Newtown. Fifteen of us attended, ate, laughed, partook of obligatory raffle and then paid our subs. Who said that our raffles are fixed? Well, we only 'fix' them once most people have won a gift and started to say "put it back" on their second win. Then, we surreptitiously look to see what the numbers are on the tickets in front of the people still waiting with bated breath for their number to be called ... and call them out. Everyone's a winner, that's so true (that's dubious ... just saying).



Christmas lunch

March 2022: The Grand Reunion in Leeds. Lizzie and Carys both attended and, doing their bit for the environment, they car-shared. Unfortunately, despite

making the original booking both Elaine and Gill had to cancel because Elaine discovered that the Reunion clashed with the Regional Brass Band Contest in Swansea, and as a member of the Newtown Silver Band Elaine couldn't let her band members down. They came (indecipherable muttering)th out of 7 bands.

THEN our feet didn't hit the ground! Next stop Caffi Clywedog, Llanidloes, where Gee had made arrangements, wearing her Powys Age Cymru/Veteran's Foundation hat, to spend the day stone sculpting, print making and making macrame wall hangings. All of this, along with a lovely lunch, funded by the Veterans' Foundation. What a day!! Weather-wise we had rain, glorious sun and then snow blizzards. Gillian Brench and Gilly Utting (one of our new members) were forced to come in from the cold, where they were busy sculpting, when the blizzard hit. From our vantage point overlooking the Clywedog valley we did at one point wonder whether any of us would be able to drive home. Poor Michelle had problems finding us in the first place, and that was before the change in weather. Her satnav let her down. She toured the Welsh mountains and retraced her route 3 times only to find that had she gone just that little bit further along that well-trod lane (like 30 yds) she would have found us first time. She arrived a gibbering wreck, but left fully artyfartified proudly carrying her macrame wall hanging. It isn't true that there were no cakes left by the time she got there, although by the time she did get there they might have been a bit stale. There were 3 different tutors and we split into 3 groups sampling each craft. Lunch was hot soup and a selection of sandwiches, all vegetarian (because it is a vegetarian café). We all had a great time.



Caffi Clywedog, Llanidloes, craft day

May 2022: On the 14th we had our AGM in a charming Old School house in Llanymynech. It was a beautiful, warm day and 6 of us managed to make the trip taking along our individual home-made tasty contributions for the spread that we ate our way through after the meeting had finished. Oh, as usual, everyone won a raffle prize, whether they liked it or not and some of us were told what prizes we were to choose (What? Not another cat mug?!?)



AGM and Raffle prize-winners

19 May - Another fantastic activity day courtesy of The Game Change Project (a social enterprise based in Mid Wales near Newtown) and The Veterans' Foundation. Off-road driving. A beautiful, warm, sunny day near Bwlch-y-Ffrydd where 5 of us, Gee, Bernie, Pauline, Gill and Elaine met up with a group of other (male) veterans and had a wonderful time racing dune buggies, driving landrovers up, over and down steep hills and operating a small digger.



The Game Change Project, near Bwlch-y-Ffrydd

Future Activities: The next activity, on 3rd July, is a Veterans' Wild Camping Weekend which will comprise horse whispering, mindfulness, 4x4 adventure, bush craft and music around the campfire. We aren't sure yet whether any of our group will be taking the plunge though.

We are also planning a trip to Aberystwyth so that we can all familiarise ourselves once more with one of our members, Judith Bradbury who, by accident, Gill came across during her last trip to Aberystwyth.

Finally we wish our Secretary Michelle a speedy recovery. A few days ago, whilst performing gardening duties, she fell on a hard patio and broke the top of her tibia. She will be in a cast for at least 8 weeks but luckily in a couple of weeks time the present full-leg cast will be replaced with a lower leg cast and knee brace. She'll do anything for attention.

Oxfordshire

Christine Townsend



We have been meeting regularly since we were allowed to at our usual venue the Littlebury Hotel here in Bicester. Over the last year we have paraded at the local church and laid the wreath actually in person; a lovely feeling for us to be able to this.

We had put the Christmas tree in St Edbergs church for the tree festival which, as always, was decorated by our own Midge, our fabulous crafts women. We had our Christmas meeting in January.



As well as that we had our annual mugging from Margaret Davies - we always support her amazing efforts in walking.

Jean and I, while out on a shopping trip, realised it was in fact our 8th birthday in May so we had to celebrate with cake and balloons - we did that in style on 14th May. We also adopted Mo the Lioness who will attend each meeting and trip out.





We have two trips planned for this year - we are off to Bletchley Park and in September Jan Dytor will be welcoming us to the Pig Place near Banbury to the veterans' day. So, a good year ahead for the girls of Oxfordshire. We meet on the second Saturday of every month and all events are on the Facebook group so please when you are in the area come and join us for lunch and a chat.

Phoenix

Sheila Johnson

The venue for the 2022 AGM, held on 7th May, was the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA). There was no shortage of visitors to the NMA itself on what was a fine sunny day. After Phoenix business issues were concluded attendees enjoyed a tasty lunch and made the most of the opportunity for catch up chats. It's a big ask to see much of the NMA in one short visit, but well worthwhile as many Association members will know.



Shropshire

Shirley 'Gladders' Gladwin
& Sandra Davies

It's that time of year again! Doesn't it go so quick? I promised myself that I would be well ahead of things, but no I failed! Not to worry though. I hope that everyone had a good Christmas and New Year, it seems so weird saying that in summer! We have had a steady 2022 so far, so this is what we have been up to:

FEBRUARY - saw our branch post-Christmas lunch. Once again, we had a great turn out and it was so good to see so many familiar and friendly faces join us for an afternoon of lively banter and good food! Decided not to write too much here, I think that the photos say that we had a good time!



Debbie, Maggie, 'Gladders' and Julie

MARCH - Time for the branches to descend upon Leeds for the Grand Reunion. It was decided that we wouldn't pre-warn Leeds that the Shropshire nutters were heading their way, it would be a nice surprise for them! As always, the organisation was second to none and I have it on good authority that the girls were well behaved!



Ali & Gladders

APRIL - I will now hand over to branch member Shirley "Gladders" Gladwin, who has saved me from writers cramp! She has very kindly put together a "few" words for us.
Sandra Davies

Defibrillator for Edgmond Bowling Club. I am a member of Edgmond Crown Green Bowling Club situated in the very pretty village of Edgmond near Newport in Shropshire. We were playing a league match there last year when a man from the opposing team collapsed on the green, he was having a heart attack. We knew that the Village Hall, just across the road, had a defibrillator and while someone ran over to the hall to get it, the stricken player was being given CPR until the Paramedics arrived. Unfortunately, the hall was locked and nobody knew the code that would release the defibrillator so it wasn't possible to take it over to where the man was still being worked on.

Sadly, by the time an ambulance arrived onsite, and despite everyone's best efforts, the man passed away. We were all very shocked and saddened to think this person had come out leaving his wife at home as usual, and all his family and friends, to play a game of bowls but was never going to return to them. This prompted us to come up with a plan to raise funds to buy our own defibrillator in case, God forbid, we ever needed one again in such an emergency. We decided to run a 24-hour Crown Green Bowling Event and we all needed to raise as much money as possible to fund this very considered but essential item.

I approached Shropshire WRACA Branch for sponsorship, and they didn't hesitate, they gave a very generous donation of £50 towards the fund and I am very happy to say the event was a huge success and we managed to raise sufficient cash to buy the machine and have it installed at the club! We all hope we never have to use it but feel much safer in the knowledge that if the unthinkable happened again to any of the players at Edgmond, we would have a better chance to save a life in the future.

Thank you, Shropshire Branch, and all my other sponsors, your money went to such a great cause and you may

well have helped to make sure we all get home safely in the future after our matches!
Shirley 'Gladders' Gladwin



'Gladders' with bowling club defibrillator

Well, there you have it, the Shropshire Branch outings so far for 2022; no doubt there will be more to come. It's a case of sticking a pin in a map of the British Isles to see where we can go and terrorise! Wherever we end up going, we know that we will get a warm reception along with wonderful company and, not forgetting, top notch food! So, till we meet again, may God be with you.
Sandra Davies

Tamworth

Chris Whitehead

Hi All, very brief notes from me as I've left it a bit late. For my sins I am now secretary of the branch, but really busy as we are organising the AGM and get together for Wales and the West area which will be in September. Time seems to fly so fast as I get older; I think that will be here and gone before I know it.

I think I left you last time just before Christmas - we had a great get together with secret Santa as well.

This year has been a bit hit and miss with various illnesses and we missed our February meeting altogether. Some of us managed to get to Leeds in March, my first Grand reunion, and a great time was had by all. I'm sure many others will give a better report but I know that even now we all know how to have a good time.

We had our Branch AGM at the Wellington; April arrived and we met at Cigno, a small café in Burntwood run by a veteran and her husband. Brilliant service and food; we will be back. In May we again met at the Wellington. We all look forward to catching up with others at the NMA picnic in July.

One of our members has been to the Battleback centre, hopefully Elaine's write up is in this issue or, if not, in the next. She is currently very busy with her Cadets.

Last but not least, the branch wants to say a big thank you to our retiring secretary, Marie Smedley. She has done a brilliant job over the last few years and is still supporting me and the branch. Here's to the next 6 months.



Worcestershire

Jane Griffin-Ash

A small, but select, group of ladies met for lunch on 19th May at Ye Olde Talbot, Worcester. A very nice lunch was had by all, and a great catch up. Attending were Jane Griffin-Ash, Marg Davies, Dawn Major (hiding behind the pillar), Pam Murray, Lisa Burnett, Joyce Nicholls, Jocelyn Welsh, Gill Bastin, Liz Starbuck and Miriam Unwin.

If you are interested in joining a new WRAC Worcester Group, to meet up for a chat and coffee, please get in contact.



London & South East

Area Co-ordinator:

Nina Smith

Email: southeast.area@wraca.org

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 Saturdays in March, May, July and September

Where: Royal Hospital, Chelsea, London

Contact: Chrissie Mills

Tel: 020 8578 2715

Invicta

When: 4th Saturday of each month

Contact: Karen Radford (Chair)

email: mousemole@msn.com,

or Jackie Elliman (Sec)

Facebook: /WRAC Invicta Branch

London

When: 1st weekend of each month

Contact: Lauren Fia MacKenzie

Tel: 07709 172351

Worthing

When: 10.00 last Tuesday of the month (except December)

Where: Lancing Parish Hall

Contact: Janet McKechnie

Tel: 01273-249746

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Worthing

Greta Carlisle

////////////////////
The Worthing Branch are continuing to meet at the Methodist Church Hall as our permanent home is still being used for booster jabs. Several of us who have had COVID 19 are now up again, if not quite running !

Greta has had her 80th birthday bash with cake, crown and candles. A great time was had by all.

On 31st May we are hosting a garden party to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee and also Eddie Sinclair's 100th birthday. She has had a hip repaired recently but is looking forward to seeing us all and enjoying the occasion.



Eddie Sinclair ATS 100 years old 26 June



Greta Carlisle on her 80th

Interest Groups

If you co-ordinate or organise a 'special interest' group let us know and we can help you and your group out and about the Association. And give us a contact name and details so if others would like to join you that would be great.

CycleFest

Contact: Liz King
Liz@trispiritevents.com

Royal Hospital Chelsea

(IP) Madge Cole

////////////////////
Last year, 2021, we had a surprise visit to the Royal Hospital Chelsea by Sarah Atherton, MP for Wrexham (ex-WRAC veteran). Myself, Monica Parrott, Barbara Whild (ex-QA) and Carol Knight were chosen to meet her.

So it came about she invited us to afternoon tea at the Houses of Parliament, at a suitable date. This year a date was arranged with Sarah and Monica, which was convenient to all. Barbara, Monica and I were dropped at the Houses of Parliament on the afternoon of 16th May. Carol was unable to join us due to another engagement.

We were welcomed by Sarah's secretary and joined by Sarah a short while after in Westminster Hall. I think Barbara, Monica and I expected a long tour of the Palace of Westminster (at some other time we'd visited for a conducted tour). This wasn't the case - we saw many things the general public on tours never get to see.

Sarah and her secretary (hope she'll forgive me for forgetting her name) took us through an iron gate and downstairs, below Westminster Hall, and to our great surprise we stood in a beautiful, very ornate, Chapel (there is no natural light). Sarah told us MPs and their families, along with members of staff, can use the Chapel for weddings and christenings.

Making our way down below the main part of the Houses of Parliament to a huge hospitality area for a cup of coffee or tea Sarah told us there is a post office, dentist, bank, hairdresser and doctor within Parliament, like a small village, also quite a number of restaurants and bars.

After refreshments we were taken to the House of Commons, to sit in the Public Gallery to watch and listen to the proceedings. Sarah would be in the House to raise her question to Parliament at 10.30pm that night.

During our travels along many corridors, down many stairs, Sarah showed us a small broom cupboard where Emily Pankhurst, the famous Suffragette, hid before the census on votes for women was made.

The highlight was Afternoon Tea in a small tea room that backed onto The Terrace. It was time to relax and enjoy a wonderful cream tea with Sarah and her lovely secretary. We were delighted that the veterans minister was also able to join us for a cup of tea and a very warm welcome.



Before our visit was over Sarah took us out on the Terrace. That was extra special as who should come out and spend a little time with us but The Speaker of the House of Commons, Sir Lindsey Hoyle. He said he'd seen us sitting in the Public Gallery. Such a lovely gentleman to talk to; made the three of us feel extra special. He said he would like to invite us for Afternoon Tea in his State Apartments one day – that would be really lovely.

Sadly, it was time to leave our wonderful hostess, Sarah, and her secretary. It was an outstanding visit for Barbara, Monica and myself, and something we will never forget. Sarah is a true ex-WRAC veteran and as our motto says "Gentle in Manner, Resolute in Deed".

Photographs:

At the Branch Secretaries Meeting Tanya kindly gave some tips on how to maximise the quality of your smartphone photos, so:

- **Please send in good quality photographs.**
- **Limit them to the best (in quality and quantity) – ideally 3 – 4.**
- **Please 'attach' photographs to emails / articles,**
- **Please do not embed them within a word (or other) document – it makes it really difficult to copy and share them to the magazine.**
- **Please title photographs, as least with those in it. You know who they are – myself and others may not.**

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, Support and Esprit de Corps.

Please continue to send in your branch/group news, reports and updates – and don't forget, they are not exclusively for those who title themselves 'branches'. If you are part of an 'interest group', eg cycling, caravanning, walking, crafting, etc, please send those reports in too, along with contact details so others can join you.

Editor



Ms Joan Bradley Centenary Celebration – 26th March 2022

The following has been shared from Joan's birthday celebrations:

"Welcome; welcome to this centenary celebration of a veteran among veterans; one of our very own, Ms Joan Bradley.

Joan was born on 30th November 1921, to Gertrude and Sydney Bartram, in the small rural village of Hingham, Norfolk. Sydney was a farm labourer who served in the Army during World War I. Joan was the eldest girl of 14 children (yes, 14!).

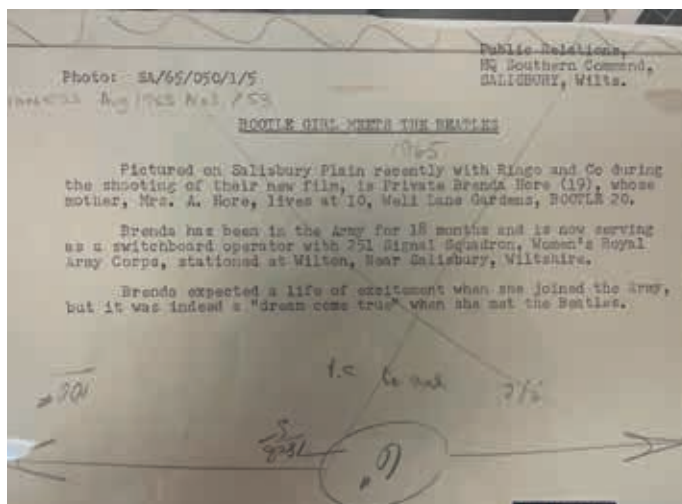
At the outbreak of the war Joan was working at Norwich Hospital and joined the ATS at a recruitment centre - the reason she joined the ATS was because the uniform was more appealing than the Navy or Air Force ones! Two of Joan's sisters also joined up – one went to the Air Force, the other also to the ATS, serving on the searchlight batteries. Joan's brother joined the Royal Navy serving on submarines, mainly on the Arctic Convoys.

'Bootle girl meets the Beatles'

The National Army Museum have a wonderful volunteer who is currently working on our WRAC collection of images and cataloguing them better. In doing this she came across this image of a WRAC lady ... with none other than the Beatles! It apparently also appeared in a copy of the Lioness, in August 1953.

Perhaps you are Brenda Hore and/or remember her.

Perhaps you were on Salisbury Plain when they were shooting their 'new' film ('Help!'). What an amazing occasion and Brenda's comment says it all, "a dream come true".



Joan served at Southend on Sea, operating the predictors on anti-aircraft guns. The predictors assisted the gunners with the vital information on the height and range of enemy aircraft. During the war Joan was injured by one of Hitler's terror weapons, a V2 rocket, which hospitalised her. After a swift recovery she returned to active duty and served until the end of the war.



A touch of destiny was about to intervene in Joan's life. It was in Southend where her path would cross that of Edgar Evans, from Normanton, who would become her future husband. Edgar had been serving in the Wakefield Company of the TA. When war was declared he was called up to the KOYLI, based at Pontefract Barracks, and dispatched to Belgium with the British Expeditionary Force. Edgar returned to England during the Dunkirk evacuation and served on the anti-aircraft guns. He was later drafted into the Royal Artillery.

Joan and Edgar dated throughout the war, establishing a romance that endured many hardships, including a period of time when they were separated due to Edgar serving in France until the end of the war. After the war, Joan and Edgar married and moved to Normanton. Sadly, Edgar had developed tuberculosis during his time in the trenches and passed away in 1952.

Joan could not celebrate her 100th birthday on 30th November, as she was in Croft Nursing Home, in Normanton, convalescing after breaking her hip and leg in a fall at home. The nursing home was under strict Covid-19 health regulations. Therefore, The Rifles, Light Infantry, KOYLI Regimental Association, decided to celebrate her centenary birthday once the Covid restrictions allowed.



"So, please be upstanding for a toast of loyalty, respect and dedication to Joan.

Please remain standing as, on this occasion, I know that Joan would like us all to raise our glasses to Her Majesty The Queen, on the occasion of this her platinum year of reign. God Save The Queen."

MEMORIES OF WORLD WAR II

Peggy Rowe (nee Roberts)

Peggy's son, Peter, let us know in December of the death of his mother Peggy Rowe (nee Roberts) and offered to share her memories of probably being the first British woman into Berlin at the end of WW2.

I was 19 years of age in 1941 and working as a trainee teacher in one of the town's private commercial colleges. I had been a late developer at school but on being introduced to a typewriter I became very involved in mastering the skills of typing and learning shorthand, and was eventually asked by the Principal of the college to join him as a student teacher.

At this time, I was very concerned and appalled that the war had started and there were casualties and, after much heart

searching, felt that I could help in some way. My parents were far from pleased when I arrived home one day and told them that I had been along to the Recruiting office in Wigan and had volunteered, and been accepted by the Army to use my secretarial skills.

In due course, I was asked to report to Yarrington for my three weeks' basic military training. I really enjoyed all the hustle and activity of learning the new disciplines like drill, going for kit, having inoculations, and looking forward to posting.

One morning my duties appeared on the notice board and was scanned by eager, transformed young ladies clad in khaki uniforms. My posting was a 'one off'. I had to present myself with all my kit to a place called Shandon, near Helensburgh, Scotland to work at Belmore House, the HQ for the military port.

Map of Port Area

I remember feeling great trepidation at the thought of travelling alone to Scotland, as I had to get myself and my kit from Central Station, Glasgow, to Queen Street Station to get the train to Helensburgh, and then a Brown's bus and ask to be dropped off at Shandon Hydro, where I was to be billeted. The Hydro was a massive place, which had been taken over by the military to house the RE's and ATS personnel needed to run the military port situation further up the loch. It turned out to be a busy port with merchant ships coming and going to such places as Murmansk, and the 'tail of the bank' at Helensburgh was the assembly point for ships joining the convey which also included a grey 'Queen Mary'.



As I had been travelling all day, I was hungry when I arrived at Shandon and was sent to the mess for a meal. The wolf whistles from the RE's and Sappers made my face go scarlet, but, on reflection, my recollection of our military men and their attitudes to women in the war makes me still feel very proud that I had the opportunity to serve with them.

Belmore House was the HQ where I worked each day in the offices of Lt. Col. Hugh V. Ellis, RE and Major Randell. Major Randall wrote most of his reports and letters in Pitman's shorthand and I enjoyed working for both him and Col. Ellis.

These were very busy days with early rising at 6am to fit in drill, physical training, lectures, kit inspections, around office duties.

After a little while the ATS office staff moved out of the Hydro at Shandon to a large private house with a thatched roof called 'Vista', situated near the port. We had such happy times here sharing experiences of visits, to traveling to wartime Helensburgh and Glasgow, and the Scottish girls inviting me to their homes in Glasgow.

All the while the port was busy loading and unloading the merchant ships and our office also monitored the submarine diving trails which took place in the loch.

Just before I left the staff moved again to Penner camp, up on the hill overlooking the loch, and we all must have been extremely fit to climb up and down the numerous steps.

So, after two happy, fun-packed, interesting years, when the rain sometimes lasted for weeks at a time and hair just would not curl, I decided to apply for an overseas posting and was

asked to join the Secretariat of the Control Commission for Germany, at Norfolk House, St James's Square London. Eisenhower's SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force) had moved over to Europe by this time.

By now a seasoned unblushing traveller, I set off on the night train from Glasgow to London and arrived to find bombs dropping from the sky. Nevertheless, I had to make my way to my billet which turned out to be a large house, No 40 Park Street, off Oxford Street, London, to join 'N' Company, No 2. London District Group ATS, and to commute to Norfolk House each day to work for the secretariat. Later, other billets were to be out at Hampstead and at Culross Street, W1.

A Miss Cormack-Smith, from the Foreign Office, was in charge of our massive office and she sent us along to various military officers to deal with their secretarial requirements. Our ability to type in German was quite routine here and most of us got to understand the language a little.

Off duty we had a chance to explore London – a London bursting with activity and interest. One great joy was to get free theatre tickets from the kiosk on Trafalgar Square and, if cash permitted, order a tea tray for the interval. We also spent happy hours at the Queensbury Club, despite the air-raids.

One day Miss Cormack-Smith asked Miss Birch (a brilliant typist) and myself to pack warm clothing as we had been chosen to go on a mission, as below: -

Flying over to Europe and using the trains in Europe now became quite common-place.

As you probably know, much preparatory work was done by the Commission in London and on cessation of hostilities in Europe most of the departments moved into Europe. We moved out to Lubbecke, and we encountered the hostility of the German villagers when we were posted in their properties and used their Tax Haus at our HQ.

From Lubbecke I moved on to Berlin and worked for the Commission there until I was demobbed. Berlin was an unforgettable experience at the end of the war. The memory of the ruins, the smells, the people, the Russians trudging off with their carts full of spoils, the intense cold, and the seemingly unsurmountable obstacles weighed heavily on our young shoulders.

Visits to the Stadtische Open, formerly Theatre des Westerns, which miraculously escaped the bombs, proved to be a god-send. The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra players were thin, haggard, and the theatre always had a smell of burning wood about it, but the music and ballets performed there transcended the horror around us and did much to inspire us to keep going – which we did.

Elizabeth Grogan's Memories ATS 1942 – 46

I was conscripted into the ATS in December 1942 and was sent to Talavera Camp, Northampton, for basic training. I was then posted to Strathpeffer, Scotland, for signals training – tele-printing and switchboard operating and signals office procedure. I was the only one going to Strathpeffer so a corporal was assigned as my escort and after several train stoppages etc, it took 27 hours to reach our destination, we spent the night on the train. I was then billeted at the Ben Wyvis Hotel and training took place in the Highland Hotel.

After training I was posted to Western Command HQ Chester and remained there until 1944. One day my name went up on orders to have a kit inspection. After the officer had finished I asked "Why have I had this inspection?" and she replied "don't you know? then let me be the first to congratulate you, you are going to COSSAC!" This meant nothing to me – COSSAC stood for Combined Chiefs of Staff to the Allied Commander (designated). I duly arrived in London, met up with others who had come from different units. My friend, who I still correspond with, came from Leamington Spa Central Midlands District. The females were taken to a temporary billet – a big house in Catherine Place off the Buckingham Palace Road. We were there for a short while and then moved to a hostel owned by Bourne & Hollingsworth, a big London store. This was near Goodge Street underground station and it was below the station itself that we began our editing training. It was very scary hearing the trains above your head. At this time the Doodle Bugs (V1 and V2 rockets) were coming over London. As long as you heard them you were alright, but when their humming noise stopped you dived for cover.

On 14th February Eisenhower was appointed as Supreme Commander and the next day COSSAC became SHAEF (Supreme HQ Allied Expeditionary Forces). SHAEF moved in March to Bushy Park, near Kingston on Thames.

Army life with the Americans was very different from that with the British Army, we had the best of everything. Better quarters, better food and there was even a ballroom on site – No.8 ballroom – where Glen Miller's band was the unit band. There was a cinema/theatre and restaurant. We were in huts; according to a newspaper cutting I have there were approximately 400 huts and 5 office blocks. When SHAEF took over Bushy camp had doubled to take 8,000 American troops.

When proceedings for D-Day got underway some of us were moved to SHAEF Forward at Portsmouth. We were billeted in one of the forts along the coast – Fort Purbrook. The men were put inside and the females in tents in the moat, things were very different. Washing and toilet facilities were non-existent. There were chemical toilets around the moat and a shanty affair for a wash place open to the elements. Bowls were placed along a wooden plank and there was a big boiler. If you took water out you had to put the same amount back in, often there was more cold than hot! There were 4 beds to each tent.

In the editing section we received 'in' and 'out' messages from the tele-printing room; decoded messages from American code and deciphered messages from British cipher, which we had to 'edit'. That is, we had to put them into readable English according to a special format, afterwards we typed on electric typewriters and then sent them to Staff Messages Control for distribution. Messages ranged from Confidential, Secret, Top Secret and 'Eyes Only'. We had had to sign that we would not divulge anything which we read.



Then soon after D-day we embarked on the troopship Cheshire at Southampton for France. We landed at Omaha Beach where no-one seemed to expect us. I will never forget being carried over the mud by US soldiers; they took us to their camp where we spent one and half nights. We were in tents, 6 to a tent, sleeping 'top to tail'. Then in darkness we boarded 3-ton trucks and were taken on a long journey to Versailles. We were accommodated at an old French Barracks – Satory Barracks. Again, toilet arrangements were very primitive. Not even chemical ones except for night-time. There were holes in the ground in a sectioned-off building affair. The 'Pilgrims of the Night' came to sort these out. Thankfully there was proper flush ones in the office where we worked directly opposite the Palace gates.

But there were compensations – being in signals we did shift work and we were in Paris every other day. When we had a 48-hour leave we were allowed to spend that at the Hotel Metropolitan in the Rue Cambon. Like it was in London, we were able to get tickets to see shows.

After the war ended on 7th May 1945 SHAEF was disbanded and the unit was split up. Some were posted to Bad Oynhausen, Brussels, some to 30 Corps British Army Frankfurt, Germany. On 19th June I was in the group going to 1 Corps Iserlohn, Germany. We went by truck to Buc airport and from there flew to Hannover. We then set out on an 8-hour truck ride through Germany. We were amazed at the devastation caused by the bombing raids – much worse than in England. Some of the Germans were hostile, booby traps were set across roads and we had an accident. There were two trucks – the kitchen and domestic staff were in the first one. I don't know quite what happened, but the truck overturned and some of the girls were injured, they were afterwards returned to England. We were in the 2nd truck and were taken to a convent while things were sorted, the nuns were very kind to us and gave us black, sugarless coffee.

We arrived at Iserlohn at 0330 – given beds in the men's barracks because our billets were not ready for us. Next day we moved into flats, I was not there long for on the morning of 29th June I was told by someone coming off night shift that it had come through on the tele-printers that six of us were going back to Paris. We left Iserlohn the next day. The six of us, and our belongings, were in a 3-ton truck escorted by two officers in a jeep. Once again we passed through the blitzed cities and towns, crossed the Rhine and Cologne and had lunch there; through Holland and Belgium and arrived in Brussels at 1800hr, where we spent the night. We left Belgium behind and into France reaching Paris late afternoon.

Next day we were told we could be with CALA (Civil Affairs Liquidating Agency) then it became CICALA. We were billeted at a girl's school in Montreuil, Paris, we were joined by 6 more girls who had been posted to Frankfurt when SHAEF was dissolved. I cannot remember how long I was with CALA before being posted back to Germany, where I remained until I was demobbed. I was there 8 months and was demobbed in England in May 1946. I was in France for 11 months.

My friend was killed in Germany, she was in a jeep going to a dance. A cable had been placed across the road, which caused the jeep to overturn. We used to get many invitations to dances from various units. The German women used to ask to do our washing, which they did beautifully. We gave them half a tablet of soap, which was very scarce. They didn't want money – we gave them cigarettes and chocolate.

Betty Webb shared lists of those ATS who served/worked at Bletchley Park

Bell (Roots, Agnes McLean - Testery
Bennett (Le Blond), Marie
Billinton, Cpl M - in Major F P Alexander's Section
Bridgewater (Gill), Anne - Testery
Brinley, Sgt P - in Major F P Alexander's Section
Brock, Sgt E A - in Major F P Alexander's Section
Buckoke, Yvonne M - Testery
Cammaerts (Lindley), Jeanne Henriette - Testery
Campbell, H V - Driver
Collins (later Solloway), June – Italian sector
Curren-Brigg, Lt A N – Capt (later Lt Col) R P Tester's Section
Currie (nee Pollard), Helen - Testery
Darby (Sealey), Jean Louise - Testery
Dobrynin (nee Wynne Angell), Cpl W J – Capt A J P Shiner's Section
Evan-Jones, Mary
Evers, Elizabeth G - Testery
Fickerly (became Dr Stephenson), Gaynor
Fletcher CSM, P L – in Capt G S Seabrooke's Section
Fowler, Cpl M E – Major Pritchard's Section
Frith, Cpl M J – Lt Jackson's Section
Graham, A - Driver
Hampson, Joyce - Testery
Herbert (Tovey), Gwen - Testery
Jaques (Leatherdal), Joan - Testery
Johnson, I M - Lt Jackson's Section
Knowles, Sgt MC
Last, Cpl J - Capt A J P Shiner's Section
Leslie, Sub K M H – in Major F P Alexander's Section
Little, Helen Mary – Linguist
Lyons-Campbell, J – Driver
Mathew, L/Cpl J E - Lt Jackson's Section
McAuslan, L/Cpl I A - in Major F P Alexander's Section
Noakes, Enid (married a member of LRDG)
Palmer (Kynaston), Margaret Gwenyth - Testery
Peters, J – Driver
Pettigrew, Sgt D W - in Major F P Alexander's Section
Pierson Sgt, M I – in ISOS, Mr Page's Section (a strong component of the Section dealt with German Secret Service ciphers)
Pollard (Currie), Helen - Testery
Runacres, Sgt E A – Capt A J P Shiner's Section
Sarney (nee Hodder), Maisey
Sattin, H M - Driver
Saward, Olive M - Testery
Sproston, Joy – Testery
Stuart, Reena
Stuart-Taylor, Lesley – Testery (Lorenz) - Testery
Taylor MA, Gladys (W/256922)
Taylor L/Cpl, M L - Driver
Tickle (Marshall), Mavis - Testery
Tucker, Angela D - Testery
Vine-Stevens (later Webb), L/Cpl Charlotte Elizabeth (Betty) – Major Tester's Section in Mansion, Hut 4 & Block F, Japan Section, and Pentagon, Washington DC
Worsley, Eleanor - Testery

(Also see James Thirsk's book 'Bletchley Park – an inmates story')

MEMORIES SHARED by Mrs Sheila Pantin (ex-Sgt W/75303)

Dear Friends and colleagues

Thank you so much for the book about the ATS, as requested – I am thoroughly enjoying it. I noticed in the latest 'Lioness' yet another book about my contemporaries which I would love to have. By strange coincidence, on the 8am BBC News next morning there were several ATS ladies who were being interviewed on their contributions to the war effort – I think they were taken from this second book.

On yet another page I noticed a request from you regarding Princess Royals. I immediately went through my photograph albums and found the following [which references The Princess Royal] and had it photocopied.

L/Cpl Sheila Hull, taken in
London during 1942



ATS Special Platoon in Leeds 1942 - Lady Harewood 'inspecting' the Platoon (open order). L/Cpl Sheila Hull 2nd from right, 2nd/middle row. Lady Harewood was the Princess Royal's Aunt (of our present Queen, who later joined the ATS)



The A.T.S. special platoon on parade in Leeds yesterday. Members of the A.T.S. Public Relations Platoon, who are touring the country to stimulate recruiting, paid a visit to Leeds yesterday and, watched by the Lord Mayor (Ald. Hyman Morris) from the Town Hall steps, gave a display of marching and counter-marching before a large gathering of city workers and shoppers. With the A.T.S. drum and bugle band, the first to be officially established, they performed intricate movements on the restricted parade ground with a smartness and efficiency which bore testimony to the work of their trainers, the Coldstream Guards. Before the march-past and salute, taken by the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoresa, the platoon paraded with the band through the center of the city. Of the 60 members of the band and platoon, two are Yorkshire girls. Private "Bunny" Clarke, of Loffhouse, was a pupil of Wakefield High School and a hairdresser in Leeds. Lance-Corporal Sheila Hull is another member of the platoon, and formerly lived on the Wyther Park Estate, Leeds. A pupil of West Leeds High School, she has now been in the A.T.S. for 14 months, and since last November has been a member of the platoon. "It's great" was her comment on Army life.

Yorkshire Post 1942: 'ATS Girls - Sheila Hull and Bunny Clarke of Leeds, cleaning buttons

Yorkshire Post 1942: ATS Girls Show What They Do

Next month the first ATS conscripts will be in camp – the girls of 20 and 21. Some of them will go from Leeds. Lucky for them that the ATS mobile exhibition is in the city until February 28; it will give them an idea of the kind of life theirs will be, once they get into khaki.

They will find two Leeds girls with the exhibition – in the drill platoon which has been trained by the Guards. L/Cpl Sheila Hull, home address Hull these days, is an old girl of West Leeds high School. Private 'Bunny' Clarke – "no 'Nobby' for me" says Bunny – comes from Loffhouse, Leeds. She was a hairdresser – and finds she still is when off duty. Its usually a case of "Bunny, I'm going out tonight. Will you do my hair?" And Bunny obliges. She just can't get away from her job.

Just as the Sayers sisters, Jean and Dorothy, can't get away from the kitchen. They both have long service stripes, but before they joined up they never "so much as boiled a kettle – and look at us now!" However, they have a reputation as to sausage rolls and cheese biscuits.

And 'Tich' Wilson did not find her introduction to the ATS any too easy. 'Tich' is a despatch rider and her machine is with her at the exhibition. A dirt track rider trained 'Tich' and passed her out in a month.

Not far from 'Tich' is the radio-location section where L/Cpl Evelyn Loubser is on duty. She came from South Africa to join up. Intended doing so from the home of her father's relatives. When she got here, she found they were in France – caught by the invasion – and there they still are. Her voice is heard on the Empire programmes; she broadcasts in Afrikaans as well as English.

There are former typists, parlour-maids and at least one mannequin at the exhibition, where the gun site with its predictor, height-finders and telescope, is a big attraction.

The Princess Royal, as Controller Commandant of the ATS, opened the exhibition this afternoon and said she hoped it would lead to closer understanding and co-operation between civilians and members of the service.



Yorkshire Post 1942: 'The ATS special platoon on parade in Leeds yesterday'

Yorkshire Post 1942: Smart Girls of the ATS

Members of the ATS Public Relations Platoon, who are touring the country to stimulate recruiting, paid a visit to Leeds yesterday and, watched by the Lord Mayor (Ald. Hyman Morris) from the Town Hall steps, gave a display of marching and counter-marching before a large gathering of city workers and shoppers.

With the ATS drum and bugle band, the first to be officially established, they performed intricate movements on the restricted parade ground with a smartness and efficiency which bore testimony to the work of their trainers, the Coldstream Guards. Before the march-past and salute, taken by the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress, the platoon paraded with the band through the centre of the city.

Of the 60 members of the band and platoon, two are Yorkshire girls. Private 'Bunny' Clarke, of Lofthouse, was a pupil of Wakefield High School and a hairdresser in Leeds. L/Cpl Sheila Hull is another member of the platoon, and formerly lived on the Wyther Park Estate, Leeds. A pupil of West Leeds High School, she has now been in the ATS for 14 months, and since last November has been a member of the platoon. "It's great" was her comment on Army life.

At 98 I find holding a pen difficult but I managed to 'parade' on my mobility scooter on Thursday 11th [November] at 11am, which was well attended, then again on Sunday 14th, which was a magnificent gathering. The muffled bells of my nearby church, St Peter's, really was something.

RECRUITMENT ADVERTS

Judy Hasnip kindly shared these 2 versions of a WRAC recruitment campaign advert (along with the article on the new WRAC Welfare Assistants – see Ben Fund Section). Sadly I cannot find any date – I am sure some of you will remember them, and when they appeared.

THIS GIRL THIS UNIFORM INDEPENDENT BUT NEVER LONELY

This is the working dress of the Women's Royal Army Corps. It's a uniform designed, in a shade of level green and intelligently fitted for each girl.

This girl wanted to get something extra out of life, to see more of the world around her. To also joined the W.R.A.C. - this means she gets the chance to work all over the world, to see new places and make new friends. At the same time, she develops her sense of independence. In the modern Army, a girl works side by side with the men who share the same job and take the same responsibilities. They're good and all of it goes into her pocket. Long holidays, good living conditions, sport and social life - you name it, the W.R.A.C. has got it! You can go in for as little as four years and have a proper training for when you leave. Find out about the W.R.A.C. in detail - just tear out the whole of this page, fill in your name and address in the space below and post it off.

To: W.R.A.C. Careers, Dept. MP & Lansdowne House, Berkeley Square, London, W.1.
Please send me the W.R.A.C. booklet and other information.

Name _____
Address _____
County _____

WRAC

THIS GIRL THIS UNIFORM AND A COMPLETELY NEW KIND OF LIFE

Here's a girl who's got a good job, good friends and plenty of security. She joined the W.R.A.C. so she could get out into the world. In the W.R.A.C. there are more jobs, more people and more opportunities. Everything's up-to-the-minute - the life, the work, the uniforms. In the modern Army, a girl works side by side with the men - she goes abroad like them and she takes many of the same responsibilities. Pay's good and all of it goes into her pocket. Long holidays, good living conditions, sport and social life - you name it, the W.R.A.C. has got it! You can go in for as little as four years and have a proper training for when you leave. Find out about the W.R.A.C. in detail - just tear out the whole of this page, fill in your name and address in the space below and post it off.

To: W.R.A.C. Careers, Dept. MP & Lansdowne House, Berkeley Square, London, W.1.
Please send me the W.R.A.C. booklet and other information.

Name _____
Address _____
County _____

WRAC

Judy also shared a copy of her 'Elizabethan Bus VOUCHER'.

Serial No. _____ The Elizabethan Bus VOUCHER (DEPOT & T.C. WRAC) Valid <u>2</u> <u>Boy</u> Rank <u>PTC</u> Name <u>ROSTRON J A</u> NOT TRANSFERABLE If found return to Adjutant, DEPOT & T.C. WRAC, LINGFIELD (Tel. Lingfield 440) Date issued <u>26 August</u> 19<u>63</u>	AFB 2603 issued/not issued Over/under 18 years of age Recruits will report back to Camp by: Saturdays 2345 hours Other days 22.15 hours Mon - Thurs 22.30 HRS Fri + Sun 23.00 HRS OUT OF BOUNDS: To ALL Recruits: Tattooists BLACKSMITH'S HEAD. To ALL Recruits under 18 years of age: All Public Houses, Taverns in NAAFI Clubs and Cocktail Bars. Signed <u>H.M.F. Praid 9/14</u> O.C. Training Coy.
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This was in the name of 'Pte Rostron J A', of 2 Company. 'NOT TRANSFERRABLE' If found return to Adjutant, Depot & TC WRAC Lingfield. Dated 26 August 1963.

Over/under 18 years of age
Recruits had to report back to Camp by:
Saturdays 2345 hours
Mon – Thurs 22.30 Hrs { obviously amended from previous
Fri & Sun 23.00 Hrs { 'Other days' ... 22.15 hours, in handwriting]

The following were marked as 'OUT OF BOUNDS':
To ALL recruits:
Tattooists
Blacksmith's Head

To ALL recruits under 18 years of age:
All Public Houses, Taverns in NAAFI
Clubs and Cocktails

Signed: M M F Praid [?] 2/Ltd

Remembrance(s)



WE WILL REMEMBER HER

We launched our campaign to get all 26 ATS servicewomen killed in Great Yarmouth onto their local war memorial in May, with little idea of how far we could get. Having used all the online research tools to hand we turned to our resourceful Lionesses across the UK to help us track down those who we had no record of.

The response has been wonderful.

We quickly heard from one relative, Marie Davis the niece of Louise Farnes and an ex WRAF, whose mum continues to remember her sister, and visits the grave she now shares with their mother. The great nephew of Roma Pearson got in touch from France, followed by WRAC Association member Nicky Okopskyj who had tracked down a war grave we knew nothing of for both Roma Pearson and Ivy Moore.

Janette Deans is another member who has been doing amazing work looking for the names of Jean Scougall and Jane McAulay. Janette has contacted churches, searched records and roped in a local genealogist as part of her tenacious search.

The tale so far involves an unusual birth certificate and the refurbishment of a branch of Pizza Express – we'll tell the full tale of this fascinating search in a future edition of the Lioness!

Andrew Verney, a Great Yarmouth local also got in touch about Jane McAulay as well as Doris Travers. He sent in photos of their war graves, which have now been added to the website. It has been wonderful to see how Association members, and members of the public alike have been energized by our campaign.

We would love to find a volunteer or two to co-ordinate this project, and would appreciate anyone who is interested getting in touch at wraca.org.uk/rememberher.

You can also find more details of the search and the outstanding names to look for in your local area.

Next year is the 80th anniversary of their deaths. Help us to ensure all of these servicewomen are appropriately honoured on their hometown war memorials.



FORTHCOMING

GUILDFORD

The Lioness understands there are several of you planning on attending at Guildford this year for Remembrance events – which is wonderful. As a Corps that enjoys the Freedom of the City, along with acknowledging that it is the 'home' of the Corps (including the Cathedral), it will be lovely to see a good turnout this year.

Please be aware:

The Act of Remembrance takes place in the town centre, not at the Cathedral. This takes place at Holy Trinity Church, the Borough church, and the War Memorial (the Cathedral holds its own events, just not the town one). NB: Space is limited in the Church and likely to be already filled.

The service will be followed by the parade through the town to the Castle Grounds for the Act of Wreathlaying.

This will be followed by a small reception in Guildhall (NB: this is by private invitation, which are limited in number).

The Lioness understands Audrey Smith has kindly found somewhere suitable for everyone to retire to after the main events – HUGE thank you Audrey.

We very much hope you all have a good time at Guildford – we know they will be very pleased to see you and will make you most welcome. Please then go back to your branches and tell everyone else so you can attend again next, or another, year.

LONDON

We are hoping the usual arrangements are in place for London this year – Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey on the Thursday, and Cenotaph on the Sunday. We have yet to receive confirmation of numbers for either / both events – but if you already have your name on the list in the office (with Tanya) then you will be contacted when we have details.

Both these events are run and organised by the Royal British Legion, and so we very much are their guests.

ELSEWHERE

We know that most of you attend Remembrance services and parades in your local villages, towns and cities. It is wonderful that you support your local area.

Everyone – please remember to send in your reports and photos for inclusion next time.

NEWS & VIEWS (general)

OTHER (military) ASSOCIATIONS / ORGANISATIONS:

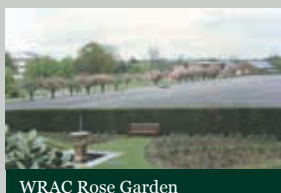
WORTHY DOWN

In 2021 we were advised that the AGC at Worthy Down were creating a Heritage Trail, a part of which would be the WRAC Rose Garden.

When Worthy Down was redeveloped the Rose Garden was temporarily relocated, and then moved into its final location – not far from its original siting but to the side of the main paths where students walk down from the College to the Mess.



Women's Royal Army Corps (WRAC)



WRAC Rose Garden

In 1965, a rose garden was installed at the WRAC Centre in Guildford in memory of Her Royal Highness Princess Mary, The Princess Royal, Controller-Commandant Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) and WRAC.

When the camp closed in 1993, the roses were transplanted to outside of the Officers' Mess at Worthy Down and dedicated in the presence of HM The Queen, Colonel in Chief, Adjutant General's Corps (AGC). In 2021, the old Officers' Mess was knocked down and the roses have been transplanted here, opposite the AGC Corps HQ building.



Guildford Rose Garden



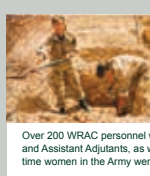
Formation

The WRAC was formed in 1949. It absorbed the remaining troops of the ATS, a wartime female force established to free up men for active service. It was common for women of the WRAC to serve with other Army regiments on long-term attachments, such as with the Royal Military Police but retaining their WRAC capbadge.



Roles and Restrictions

Throughout the Corps' history, women worked in over 40 trades, including as staff officers, clerks, chefs, dog handlers, communications operators, drivers, intelligence analysts, military police women, and postal and courier operators. It was not until the 1980s that women were allowed to train in, carry and use firearms, and in 1984, women were permitted to undergo officer training at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. Before then, they had a separate training college at Hindhead and then Camberley.



Active Service

WRAC members served on many operations, including Malaya (1948-60), Kenya (1952-60), Cyprus (1954-59), Aden (1963-67), Northern Ireland (1969-2007) and the Gulf War (1990-91). Fifty-nine members of the WRAC died in service.

Over 200 WRAC personnel were deployed to the Gulf War to work as Staff Officers and Assistant Adjutants, as well as serving as Intelligence Analysts. This was the last time women in the Army were deployed on a large scale as a separate corps.



Legacy

The WRAC formally disbanded in 1992. By 1997, the number of roles open to women in the Army had risen from 47% to 70%. This rose to 80% in 2016, when the ban on serving on the front line was lifted.

In October 2018, all Army roles were finally opened up to women, including Infantry and Special Forces units.

The WRAC Association

The WRAC Association remains active to this day, supporting former servicewomen of the ATS and WRAC. Whether Regular, Voluntary Reserves or formerly Territorial Army, the Association provides benevolence and comradeship, maintaining the esprit de corps and organising events throughout the year. A nationwide network of branches maintains the strong bonds formed in service, welcoming new members year on year.



Celebrating our past, shaping our future.
wraca.org.uk

Information reproduced courtesy of the National Army Museum, nam.ac.uk and Major (Ret'd) Jan Brodie-Murphy from her personal collection.

The AGC also planned on putting up a series of Information Boards, including reference to the WRAC and the Rose Garden – see photo above.

The Rose Garden and Heritage Trail were formally opened in April and we are hoping to organise a visit to see it and the remainder of the Heritage Trail.

AGC Museum

The Adjutant General's Corps Museum (in Winchester) is entering into an exciting redevelopment project, nearly twenty years after Her Majesty the Queen opened the Museum in 2003. The project will not only redevelop the physical space but will also allow the Museum to tell the personal stories of those who have served in the AGC and its antecedents, both digitally and through permanent and temporary exhibitions.

As part of this project, the Museum is looking to further its collection representing the history of women in the Army. We have been actively collecting this history since the Museum opened but are looking to expand the collection to tell more diverse and personal stories representing the women who served in the WAAC, QMAAC, ATS and WRAC. We are looking for photographs and memorabilia, especially from overseas service, operational service, the post-1970 history of the WRAC, and the period before the formation of the AGC in 1992. The Museum would also like to collect, through written form or oral histories, memories of your service in the Army. Personal stories are central to the collection and can bring objects and stories to life for all visitors.

Please contact the curator, Bianca Taubert-Brayley, to discuss the possibility of any donations, or if you would like to record your service history ideally by the end of summer.

Contact details:

Email: curator@agcmuseum.org.uk

Telephone: 01962 877826

Postal address: The AGC Museum, Peninsula Barracks, Romsey Rd, Winchester SO23 8TS

Social media: @AGCMuseum



NIVETS



Northern Ireland Veterans' Association Service of Remembrance

**National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, Staffs.
11.30 am Saturday 10th
September 2022**

This years' service to commemorate and remember all those who lost their lives in service of the Crown as a result of the conflict in N. Ireland will be held on Saturday 10th September 2022 at 11.30 at the NMA. The service will be followed by a parade down to the Ulster Ash Grove for the laying of wreaths.

Following the laying of the wreaths, there will be a 20-minute pause before the parade forms up for the return march to the visitor centre during which the guest of honour will take the salute.

The service is open to all. We look forward to welcoming you to our annual memorial service. For further information please email direct on msangster4@blueyonder.co.uk or visit our website at: www.nivets.org.uk

Not Forgotten Association



THE NOT FORGOTTEN

The NFA has been 'proudly supporting our armed forces, restoring dignity, confidence and independence since 1920'. They support over 100,000 beneficiaries.

They provide events for wounded serving personnel and disabled veterans, which improve physical and mental health, address isolation and loneliness, and promote a sense of community and balance. This enables beneficiaries to live a normal, if not better life. Some of the events they provide include Royal parties, holidays, outings and concerts & TV.

For some of these events we get notification direct into HQ Office, but for all their news and updates sign up to their newsletter. Go to their website (<https://thenotforgotten.org/>), email (info@thenotforgotten.org) or phone (0207 730 2400) for more information.



Fighting with Pride

Fighting With Pride (FWP) is a small but busy charity, formed in January 2020, the 20th anniversary since the LGBT+ Armed Forces ban was lifted. The WRAC Association and FWP have had close links ever since - WRAC Life Vice President Ali Brown OBE is FWP Vice Chair, and Association Trustee Shân Veillard-Thomas is also heavily involved with FWP.

Members have enjoyed brilliant short breaks in Snowdonia and Devon along with FWP's first Ball last year. Many were also honoured to be part of FWP's division of LGBT+ veterans who marched at the Cenotaph last year. The Snowdonia trip in September 2021 brought 9 WRAC veterans together in Llanberis, with FWP's team of local guides, Pride Expeditions. The photos on the next page show the fun and temerity of the group when abseiling, coast-steering, raft-building and racing,

kayaking and hill walking. In Devon, with the support of FWP and The Landmark Trust, 8 WRAC and WRNS veterans had a brilliant few days combining a visit to BRNC Dartmouth with country house visits, axe throwing, archery, cross country and cycling.

Participants report they have formed friendships with others similarly affected by the ban. The women say they have then found a warm welcome in the WRAC Association, an organisation that some felt they would not be allowed to join because of the circumstances of their dismissal. The WRAC Association is a place where all are welcome, regardless of status, service record or rank, and we have been delighted to see these connections made.





With the support of veterans, FWP has been able to help transform the understanding of the challenges faced by so many members of our community, enlightening mental health and wellbeing support organisations and charities, creating support pathways and helping shape support services to be understanding, welcoming and inclusive. They have built community friendships, driven research, raised the profile of LGBT+ Veterans with hundreds of organisations, including within the Armed Forces Covenant itself, in all four nations of the United Kingdom, as well as internationally.

FWP is not a membership organisation and it welcomes LGBT+ veterans, serving personnel and families, as well as LGBT+. For more information see www.fightingwithpride.org.uk

LGBT Veterans Independent Review.

Dear members,

As your Vice President, I am immensely proud of the strides we have taken in recent years to promote better outcomes for female veterans, and of the partnerships we are forging to support all women who served in the WRAC and ATS. One such alliance with the charity Fighting With Pride allows us to better support our LGBTQ+ veterans, with our CEO Paula Rogers and Life VP Ali Brown both sitting on the LGBT Veterans Fighting With Pride Reference Group.

The Government's Independent Review Chairman The Rt Hon. Lord Etherton PC, Kt has launched a Call for Evidence on the impact of the pre-2000 ban on homosexuality in the Armed Forces, and I hope that those affected will feel empowered to offer your own experiences in order to ensure our voices are heard, women are represented, and a full picture is presented.

The Call for Evidence seeks testimony on the impact of the pre-2000 ban on homosexuality in the Armed Forces from those who served between 1967 and 2000, and will gather views on:

- How LGBT personnel were treated in their service lives.
- The impact of the ban on individuals and those around them throughout their lives.
- How being dismissed from Service affected personnel and their families.
- How services for veterans today can be made more accessible and inclusive for LGBT veterans.
- How Government will recognise and accept LGBT veterans as full members of the Armed Forces community.
- How the Government can acknowledge and appreciate the service of LGBT Veterans and enable meaningful resolution.

WRAC Association members can provide evidence to the Independent Review through the online response form, or you can request a printed questionnaire by sending your address to: Freepost LGBT VETERANS INDEPENDENT REVIEW. The online form and full details of the ways to have your voice heard can be found at www.gov.uk/government/publications/call-for-evidence.

The Call for Evidence will close on 15 November 2022. Responses are welcomed from all those who served in the UK Armed Forces and their families, including LGBTQ+ veterans; those who were not LGBTQ+ but were perceived to be gay or lesbian and received discriminatory experiences; and other military personnel who served between 1967 to 2000 and who witnessed the effects of the ban including those who were involved in implementing and enforcing the ban - military police, medical personnel and legal officials.

Importantly each respondent has the option to remain anonymous, or to waive that right and be open to further questions. All questions are optional, and there are resources available for anyone needing additional support as a result of engaging with this process.

Having spoken to members who were affected I am acutely aware of the enduring pain caused by the ban on homosexuality. I hope that our members feel able to contribute to this vital stage of the Independent Review, and thank all of those who decide to take part.

Yours sincerely



Fiona Gardner

Read all about it! Read all about it!



Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Kent greets Cpl Raffler after inspecting the WRAC Guard of Honour on arrival at 29 Coy WRAC.

Coy WRAC by the OC, and showed particular interest in the numerous sports cups and trophies displayed for her to see. The Orderly Room excitedly awaited her arrival, and after Capt Jo Bower the 2IC was presented she introduced Her Royal Highness to the waiting Administrative Staff, before she was shown into the PAMPAS suite to see how the Army's Personnel administration is now done by computer.

HRH then visited the WRAC Junior ranks accommodation and after a tour of several rooms, was introduced to each of the Platoon Officers, and members of their respective Platoons in the sitting room. The next stop was the Rheindahlen military training area. Military training was of great interest to the German Press as women do not play any part in their armed forces. Any myths regarding women being any less competent with weapons than their male counterparts were soon dispelled with LCpl Shea from 4 Signal Gp proving to be a very good shot with the SMG on the 30M range. WO2 Cardy, for whom this was her last day in the Army before retiring to open a business in Southampton, explained that all aspects of military training were taken very seriously. Several girls had just completed their NBC training, and were possibly very thankful to be clad in their protective clothing, as they avoided becoming a substantial feast for the resident mosquitoes in the area who quite evidently were not on a 'micro-diet'!

Time waits for no man – and if you are a WRAC reporter neither does the bus. Trodden underfoot by the

ever-chivalrous Press I was left behind to find my own way to the WRAC WOs and Sgts Mess some 4k's hence. One high speed RMP Squad car and a certain amount of BFT practise later ensured that I arrived in time to have the honour of having tea with Her Royal Highness along with the PMC of the Sgts Mess, WO2 Kaye from 1 Sqn, 16 Signal Regt, and the SWOPT BAOR, WO1 Taylor.

The Garden Party, with representatives from all units and departments employing WRAC, was a pure delight. The combination of strawberries and cream, Earl Grey tea and background music by the Band of the 4/7 Dragoon Guards provided the classical setting for a Summer Garden Party; the sun shone throughout and June was as it should have been.

Although the visit to 29 Coy WRAC was thus over, HRH then attended the official Queen's Birthday Parade and Reception which was a marvellous spectacle of Marching Bands and the British Army and RAF at its best. Many WRAC in the area worked extremely hard throughout the evening, acting as official ushers, hostesses, stewardesses and cloakroom attendants.

Thanks and congratulations go to all the WRAC who were involved in the months of hard work, careful planning and preparation which was needed prior to the visit. It was all worthwhile in the end, because the visit was a resounding success, and HRH thoroughly enjoyed all the events, and in particular meeting so many of the girls.

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Did you know that being a WRAC Association member gives you access to every back edition of the Lioness and Old Comrade's Association Gazette in our archive – dating all the way back to 1920! We have a treasure trove of old photos and articles – people you will remember and news from across 100 years of magazines. Here's a page from 1987 which caught our eye. Flick through the editions from your chosen years by logging into the membership section of our website wraca.org.uk



Obituaries - Their Final Salute



SUZANNE BARKER (nee Davies) Died 27 July 2021

Sue Squire shared these photos of Suzanne's funeral. Syd Barker shared a copy of Sue's Discharge book:

Military conduct: Exemplary
Testimonial: Cpl Davies has proved herself to be competent tradeswoman who requires minimal supervision. She has a cheerful and polite manner and gets on well with all ranks. She has shown the ability to supervise others and sets an example in trust and integrity. She is thoroughly honest, sober and trustworthy.
Company Commander (29 Company WRAC)
16 June 1974



PAULINE ANNE BOOTH (nee Bainbridge) Died 17th March 2022



Pauline attended St Margaret's girls' school in Exeter, which she loved and always valued the education she received, and started her officer training a few months after her 18th birthday in 1966. She served in Hong Kong, where she suffered some ultimately life-restricting leg injuries in a car crash. When she was approximately 21 she married The Honourable Roland Hancock (later to become Lord Castlemaine) and lived in Hampshire. They were married for some time before divorcing, after which she met and married Roger Booth of Durham.

She had always been a keen rider (having her first pony when aged 12) and began a successful equestrian centre in Durham, running holiday camps, teaching riding, managing livery and establishing a one-day eventing course at which British Eventing held novice eventing days. She was herself an experienced rider and was able to indulge her passion for hunting while living in Yorkshire, Ireland and Durham, prior to moving to the Isle of Man. Her strength of character was most evident when she 'persuaded' Roger to take up hunting despite his preference for classic cars!

Latterly she spent many months of the year cruising around the world with Roger (and more recently on her own after he died). Pauline Booth died on 17th March 2022 in Miami while on a cruise.

Stephen Edlmann
Son-in-law

TRACY ANN BRADBURY (nee Woodbridge), L/Cpl W0466327 Died January 2022



Mum joined up young at 17 from a small village near Ely where she grew up. She mainly worked as a clerk in the Ministry of Defence and alongside the Royal Engineers in Catterick, serving between 1979 and 1985. She always spoke fondly of her time in the Army and would tell us what she would get up to. [She was involved on some WRAC Facebook groups as well, maintaining her links].

Whilst working in London, she met her future husband Philip Bradbury who served in the RAF. Mum left the Army on family grounds when she became pregnant and, as a family, moved around the world to wherever Dad was posted.

We settled as a family back in her childhood village, but travelling was still in Mum's blood and Dad and she continued to travel the world seeing as much as they could, and was always

happiest when by the sea. She always instilled in all four children to grab every opportunity you can whenever you can.

Mum became ill three years ago with ovarian cancer and appeared to draw on her Army mentality of carrying on, and as a family we made the most of the time we had.

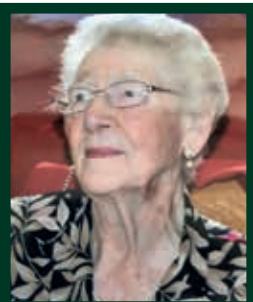
Mum sadly passed away with her family around her. A much-loved daughter, mother and grandmother.

'Meet me where the sky reaches the sea'

Amber Bradbury (daughter)



MARY (MOLLY) CLARKE
(ex ATS)
29th December 1920 –
5th March 2022



Mary Clarke, also known as Molly, was born on December 29th 1920 in Salisbury and moved to Wilton in the mid-1930s with her family where she lived in South Street. She passed away 5th March 2022 aged 101.

Molly joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service in 1941. She was in 129 Mixed Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery, in which she served for four and a half years until she was demobbed in 1945. Molly saw most of her action when posted in Kent, playing a key role countering the threat of V-1 and V-2 missiles. Her unit was involved in trying to shoot down German "Doodle Bug" pilot-less, flying bombs, that were targeting London at the time. As part of her role she would track aircraft and send information to soldiers manning the artillery. Molly said it was an experience she will never forget, adding she found it very interesting and loved every minute of it.

After demobilisation in 1945 she married Jim, a bombardier, who was taken prisoner at Dunkirk and had been a

prisoner of war in Poland for six years. On marrying her husband Jim, a former mayor of Wilton from 1978 to 1979, the couple moved into the property where she continued to live until her passing. They had a son, three grandchildren and three great grandchildren. She was married to Jim for 63 years.

Molly also attended the Thursday Club in Wilton and was a keen knitter making items for children in the area. Along with being an avid member of the Wilton Branch of the Royal British Legion and Wilton Royal Artillery Association, Molly was involved in Poppy Collections, and other fundraising events. Molly was described as a "real character and a lovely lady, with a big smile for everyone" adding "she will be sorely missed by members of Wilton Branch, Royal British Legion." She had many stories to tell.



DORA CUDLIPP
1st May 1920 – 26 April 2022



Having grown up on a farm in Capel, Surrey, Dora was working in the local butchers when, in 1922, aged 22, she received her conscription papers. Dora didn't have to travel far to Queen's Camp in Guildford to complete a month's basic training before being posted to London. She was trained as a clerk with the Royal Army Service Corps. At the end of their training the girls went to a holding unit in Torquay to await postings, and as luck would have it Dora was posted, with the friends she had made, to Cheltenham. But it wasn't long before she was on her way to Oxford, where she worked in the Accounts Section. Dora was responsible for checking bills in respect of civilian vehicles and trades people hired by the Army, and generally maintaining records and accounts as part of a team. During this time she rose through the ranks; Lance Corporal, Corporal and finally Sergeant. Dora spent a happy wartime in Oxford where she stayed until she

was demobbed in 1946 returning to her family in Capel.

Sadly, Dora passed away just days before her 102nd birthday, but the Association was pleased to have been able to provide a Buddy, with whom Dora enjoyed friendly phone calls over the last year or so and with whom she shared her war time stories.

Dora's Buddy, Moira, says of Dora, "she's a strong, independent, down to earth and considerate person who enhanced my thinking on life and brought joy to me each time we spoke on the phone. Giving her story, thinking back to her ATS days, reawakened happy memories and a purpose to her days."

[Editor: If you would like to join the Buddy Buddy Scheme call the office on 0300 400 1992 or visit the website to register www.wraca.org.uk]



**ALISON
HALFORD-MACLEOD**
1943 – 2022



Alison was commissioned in February 1966. She was posted as a recruitment officer in Aberdeen from 1967-1969, when she married Philip Halford-Macleod. They had three children, of whom she was extremely proud, with a daughter, one son serving in the Black Watch and the other in the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards. Through them she had 11 grandchildren. In 1988 Alison and her husband moved to Edinburgh and she re-joined the WRAC, again in recruitment.

Alison was a SSAFA case worker for 35 years, receiving a Long Service Award. She was also a member of the Children's Panel in Glasgow, Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Fife, and Treasurer of the Fife and Tayside Branch of the WRAC Association.

Recovering from the death of her husband, Alison was looking forward to rural life again when she was diagnosed with the cruel Motor Neurone Disease. A Memorial Service was held for her at Cleish Parish Church on 31st May 2022. A life well lived.

Isobel Gordon



**KATHLYN (KAY) ELEANOR
HOLLADAY-SEGRAVE
(nee Holladay)
6th July 1925 –
26th November 2021**



'Kay' was the only child of Percy and Ethel Holladay. She was brought up quite strictly and was an obedient child, or so she would say. She grew up in London, was 14 years old when war started and was briefly evacuated to a village near St Albans. However, she soon returned home and spent most of the war in north London.

She enlisted in London 15th May 1944 aged 18 years, No W/303059. Her initial training was at Guildford then at a Driver, maintenance and map reading course at Camberley 29th June to 5th September 1944. She passed her driving test 22nd August 1944 and she liked to say that she had the same driving instructor as the Queen. This led to a lifelong interest in driving - in 1988 she became a member of the Institute of Advanced Motorists and later a 'veteran driver', holding a driving license for over 70 years in total!

She was posted to Milford Haven, Pembrokeshire, 166 M H Ack Ack Rgt, as a private driver and she drove, and maintained, everything from a small utility to a 3-Ton Bedford lorry. The Regiment moved to Neath, in South Wales - memories from here were mostly of a very cold winter! She then moved to RASC, headquartered in Doncaster now driving an ambulance, and was posted to various places including Huddersfield and Colchester. She often told entertaining stories of driving prisoners of war across the country as well as living in Nissan huts; one of the most character-building times of her life.

Kay met her first love Richard Kearns, later to become her fiancé, at Junior Air Corps Wembley as cadets in 1942. He served in the RAF as a flight engineer, flying Stirlings and Halifax. Sadly, Richard was killed in a plane crash in February 1947. This had a great impact on her, she never flew anywhere ever.

She was de mobbed sometime in 1947 and went back to work at the family business in Cricklewood north London, a men's and boys wear shop. She married Derek Adamson in the summer of 1952; he was studying at the university of Nottingham, where they lived for a couple of years, before settling down in, first, Ruislip then Ickenham, Middlesex. Their interest was boating, and they acquired a cruiser, which they kept on the river Thames, even before they had a car travelling there by bus.

Her energies in the 60s and 70s went in to raising 2 children, Carolyn and Timothy. Sadly, the marriage did not last past this and on her separation in 1983 she moved to the coast near Bognor Regis where she settled for the third phase of her life.

Kay was an avid theatre goer and actually took part as an extra in a production of Cavalcade at Chichester Festival Theatre in 1985. Here she made many friends who she kept in touch with for the rest of her life.

Although past retirement age she enjoyed working as a carer, mostly doing night shifts in a local care home, and also caring for her grandchildren. She volunteered as well at Citizens Advice, SSAFA and as a guide at the Aviation Museum at Tangmere. As 'nana' she was actively involved in the lives of her grandchildren, always with a museum or place of interest to visit.

Kay's links with the army were strong and she was an active member of the WRAC Portsmouth branch for many years, always interested in what was going on even if she was unable to attend. In fact, she specifically requested the Standard to be laid on her coffin, to which was added her cap and medal from her army days.

She attended the 75th anniversary Grand Reunion of WRAC in 1994, and attended the Ladies mixed heavy Ack Ack reunions in York every year from 1995 onwards. She had Life membership certificate of Royal Artillery Association November 1996; and marched at the Cenotaph Remembrance Day parade on at least 2 occasions.

She had a wicked sense of humour - her face would light up when she told or heard a funny story. Kay was a fiercely independent lady, she travelled widely both with friends and on her own and lived in her own flat to the end. She had led a full, varied and interesting life.

Carolyn Munday (daughter)



**PRISCILLA WELDON
(ex ATS)
Died 28th January 2022
(aged 102)**

[WW2 veteran and past Board member of ATS & WRAC Benevolent Fund 1962 – 1988, chairing for 2 years]

Beloved widow of 'Koko', greatly loved mother, step-mother, grandmother and great-grandmother and their families.

Mark Weldon (son)



**ELEANOR HANNAH
MAHER**
Died 10th September 2018
(aged 93)



Harry Memories Hereford 1944



Eleanor was a beloved Mum, Grandma and Great Grandma and attended Anzac Commemoration Days every year, in Queensland, Australia. She was an active member of the RSL and Red Berets Association till near the end.

Brian Sketcher

ELLENOR MYRA MARSH
10th October 1925 - 22nd
March 2022, age 96



Ellenor was born in Penshaw, Co. Durham and died in Shiney Row (which adjoins Penshaw). She served in the ATS 1944/45. Shortly after enlistment she had a finger-end blown off charging detonators into bullets in the Aycliffe Munitions Factory. She later served as a cook. Ellenor greatly appreciated being a member of the Association.

Peter Marsh (son)



AUDREY MERTON
Died March 2022



Royal Hospital Chelsea In-Pensioner Audrey Merton joined the Territorial Army on the 9th December 1953, and served for a year before joining the Women's Royal Army Corps at Northampton on the 16th January 1955. Having completed her training at Guildford, she was posted to the 4th Battalion RAOC at Chilwell, during which time she prepared Land Rovers and other vehicles for service in Cyprus.

Two years later she was promoted to Corporal and sent to Gibraltar, where her main responsibility was the delivery of stores across the island. This was a place where she found the greatest fulfilment in her job, as well as thoroughly enjoying her surroundings. In December 1959, she returned to COD Donnington, and for the next seventeen years, served

with 2 Independent Company. Audrey was ultimately in charge of the WRAC section and ended her service as an acting Warrant Officer Class 2. Many people are unaware that she was a crack shot and won competitions for her marksmanship, including the Western Command Women's trophy and the WRAC rifle competition of 1973, to name but two. For her loyal service she was awarded the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal.

On leaving the Army, Audrey drove stacking machines, which loaded goods onto various lorries in the Telford area. She also spent a further five years with the TA, serving with the Queen's Own Mercian Yeomanry (V). Much of her life prior to her admission to The Royal Hospital Chelsea revolved around her nine-year old dog and the provision of care services for elderly people in her immediate area. In 1975, she was awarded the British Empire Medal for her tireless work in support of her local community. Audrey always had a heart for people, and it is testament to her enthusiasm and amiability, that she was duly honoured in this way.

In 2011, Audrey became a Chelsea Pensioner and was posted to Paget Ward as part of No. 4 Company. She quickly established herself as one of its cherished characters and before long she knew just about everyone; staff, volunteers, and fellow In-Pensioners alike.

Around The Royal Hospital Audrey could always be relied upon to make everyone smile, with her mischievous sense of humour and hearty laugh. She joined in with a wide range of activities and outings and would volunteer for any trip, without knowing where she was going or whom she would meet. Her love of dogs prompted her to always look forward to visits from the Battersea Dogs & Cats Home. These visits always brought such enjoyment to her day.

In 2017, when Audrey received her mobility scooter, it gave her a new lease of life and enabled her to continue doing the things she loved most. She would remind everyone that it wasn't quite the Lambretta she owned in the 1960's but she loved it anyway and would often be seen driving around the site, cheerily beeping her custom-fitted horn at everyone she passed.

It is no secret that Audrey idolised Teresa, who at that time was the Activities Coordinator. When Holland Opera, or the Ra Ra Theatre Co. performed, she was not afraid to enthusiastically show her appreciation, or loudly shout out the answers to their questions. Periodically a particular Elvis impersonator would visit whom she treated as though he were the legend himself. She loved every minute of his

performances, persuading him to give encore after encore while refusing to let go of his hand. Elly and her team took over where Teresa left off and Audrey was always quick to suggest different types of entertainment, primarily so that she had first choice!

Rarely is there someone that everyone loves within a community – although Audrey was that person. Such was her winsome personality, that when a dignitary or high-ranking official visited, she gave an honest answer to any question, which sometimes proved hilarious! And, if anyone had gained, or lost weight, she would tell them so, or tell others in a rather loud stage whisper! She was the only one to get away with such comments, causing everyone to collapse into fits of laughter – but that was just Audrey! She cut through formality and made people feel special. She brought nothing but joy to those she met and her sense of humour, her ready smile and infectious laugh will live long with everyone who knew her well.

It was sad to see that sparkle slowly fade as she grew more frail. But that is not what anyone who knew her will remember. When they think of her, they will reminisce over her vivacious personality, her kind nature and her sheer generosity of spirit. She was a one-off, a very special and much-loved lady who came through tremendous hardships, especially in her childhood, that simply could not dampen her zest for life.

There will only ever be one Audrey, and we all miss her.

Phil Shannon



DIANE WESTON 18th February 1950 – 10th February 2022

Diane joined the WRAC on 26/10/1967 and served a total of 4 years. She was a PTI and very proud of the badges she earned in Netball and Badminton. On leaving she joined the TA for a number of years. As a dedicated member of the WRAC Association she was wholly reliable and nothing was ever too much trouble for her in supporting the Branch. A number of trips would not have been possible for some members if not for her willingness to act as chauffeur. Diane died peacefully in Bedhampton Nursing Home and is a sad loss to the Branch.

Val Duke
Portsmouth branch

Last Post

Bell, Mrs Lillias of Perth in April 2022 (WRAC)

Booth, Mrs Pauline (nee Bainbridge) of Durham in March 2022 (WRAC)

Bowers, Mrs Sheila (nee Powell) of Hull in February 2022 (WRAC)

Brien, Mrs Kirna (nee Pretty) of Vancouver, Canada on 12th May 2016 (ATS)

Collin, Mrs Jean (nee Bellingham) of Galashiels in May 2022 (ATS)

Colquhoun MBE, Miss Moira of Ayrshire on 21st April 2022 (WRAC)

Cudlipp, Dora of West Sussex in April 2022 (ATS)

Evans, Mrs Madge (nee Grundy) of New Milton in May 2022 (WRAC)

Gravett, Mrs Iris (nee Pavey/Joyce) of West Sussex on 30th October 2022 (ATS)

Halford-Mcleod, Mrs Alison of Fife in February 2022 (WRAC)

Holladay-Seagrave, Mrs Kay (nee Holladay) of Bognor Regis on 26th November 2021 (ATS)

Lawrence, Mrs Diane (nee Gordon-Winberley) of Bridport, Dorset (WRAC)

Maher, Mrs Eleanor (nee Robshaw) of Queensland, Australia on 10th September 2018 (ATS)

Marsh, Miss Ellenor of County Durham on 21st March 2022 (ATS)

Meller, Mrs Josephine (nee Baker) of York on 13th May 2022 (WRAC)

Murphy, Miss Georgina of Liverpool 22nd March 2022

Ross, Mrs Mary (nee Scott) of Tiverton on 7th January 2022 (WRAC)

Steadman, Mrs Sandra (nee White) of Bristol in June 2022 (WRAC)

Tipton, Mrs Anne (Nancy) (nee Scott) of Telford on 24th June 2022 (ATS)

Ward, Mrs Florence (nee Chadwick) of Birmingham in March 2022 (ATS)

Watson, Mrs Meg (nee Howell) of Great Yarmouth on 22nd February 2022 (ATS)

Weston, Miss Diana of Portsmouth on 10th February 2022 (WRAC)

Williams, Miss Sarah (Lily) of Porthcawl on 21st March 2022 (WRAC)



Legacies & Donations



IN MEMORIAM

Since the last Lioness kind donations were made by individuals and Branches in memory of the following persons:

Sue Elsknis RIP

June Green RIP

Diana Weston RIP

Kay Holladay-Segrave RIP

Jean Canning RIP

Margaret Watson RIP

Sue Green RIP

LEGACY

Since the last Lioness the WRAC Association very much appreciated the legacy received from:

Grace Gibson RIP

**Throughout the years we have
been enormously grateful
to those who remember the
Association
in their wills. Tens, hundreds
or thousands, every penny
allows us to continue to
support women
who served.**



Association News and Updates

Presentation of NAM Portrait



FINALLY! I was in the right place at the right time and our CEO Paula Rogers was able to present me with a copy of my portrait, painted by Scott Pohlshmidt in 2019 (as part of the Association's centennial exhibition).

Thank you very much to everyone who made the whole experience possible.
Wendy Hooton

Neoteric Dance Company

Hear Her Voice

Neoteric Dance Company is a dance collective who works with dancers and mixed media artists to create thought provoking films and projects, supporting the armed forces community, those struggling with mental health issues and exploring wider social issues that are important to their artists and local communities.



They have been awarded Arts Council Funding to create a project called 'Hear Her Voice' - which will see the Company work with ex-service women, so they can find out about their transitional stories of leaving the armed forces and returning to civilian life. They would like to reach as many women as possible, to hear about their experiences and then take this information to create a professional dance and mixed media film, that will be shared at a number of events in- and out-side the UK.

If you are interested to learn more and/or share your experiences please contact the Dance Company direct on 07808 208389, via email (neotericdancecompany@gmail.com) or have a look at their website (www.neotericdancecompany.com).

CONGRATULATIONS

... to the following who have celebrated their 100th birthdays since the last Lioness edition:

Hylde Rivett, Banbury (January)
Maureen Davin, Liss (February)
Peggy Ross, Chesterfield (March)
Freda Gabrielle Lyon, Wells (April)
Vera Waddington, Leicester (May)
Alice Mary Diele, Santa Rosa, USA (May)
Edna Sinclair, Worthing (June)
Kathleen Dawson, Tauranga, NZ (July)

If you know of any ex-ATS or ex-WRAC who is due to celebrate their 100th birthday in the latter part of 2022 and 2023 please let us know. We may not have their details but want to ensure that we send them the Associations' very best wishes along with a card and some flowers. Please let HQ Office know.



Defence Discount Service

Some of you may know about this Service offered to all those serving, or who served, in the Armed Forces and the armed forces community. The below is taken from the 'home page' of their website – so please take a look, sign up and take advantage of the discounts they have negotiated for your benefit.

"The official MoD discount service for the Armed Forces, Veterans and Armed Forces Community. It provides discounts both online and on the high street for members of the Armed Forces, Veterans and Armed Forces Community.

Defence Discount Service is home of the Defence Privilege Card, the vetted discount card that can be used in stores, restaurants and venues to obtain armed forces discounts. This discount card allows Veterans and the Armed Forces Community to have a card that can allow them to receive military discounts.

WHO QUALIFIES?

Serving Armed Forces
Reserve Forces

Spouses/Partners of serving personnel
HM Armed Forces Veterans (ex serving)
MoD Civil Servants
Bereaved Family Members
War/Service Widow(er)s
Cadet Forces (over 16)
NATO Personnel in the UK

www.defencediscountservice.co.uk

Novel ways of raising funds for the Association



www.giveacar.co.uk

Joan Heggie discovered how easy it was to donate the proceeds of selling her car to the Association. Giveacar is a not-for-profit social enterprise that can turn your old car into cash for any UK charity. They arrange free collection, then either sell your car at auction or scrap it, with the proceeds (minus the service fees) raised going to your charity. Joan was amazed at how much her car made; far more than the local garage or scrap dealer would have given her.

She said "it couldn't have been better" and we say a big thank you to Joan for the £552.45 cheque received from GiveaCar.



Poppy Frames

Each time someone purchases a poppy frame with the ATS or WRAC badge the company sends the Association £25!! The company is owned by Mr Ray Collister MBE, a veteran of the Irish Guards. He is a keen fundraiser for military charities.

www.poppyframes.co.uk

Check out the art gallery and framing services he does at www.frameuk.net



"Veterans' Gateway – information, advice and support for veterans and their families"

www.veteransgateway.org.uk

"Here for you 24/7, we are the first point of contact for veterans and their loved ones. We can directly refer you to our verified, expert partners including Combat Stress, SSAFA, Poppy Scotland and more".

The Veteran's Railcard

"The Veterans' Railcard benefits more than 830,000 veterans who do not already qualify for existing discounts. Get discounts for both you and your family". Enquire of your local rail provider and/or visit: <https://www.veterans-railcard.co.uk/>

Other help available:



Housing



Employment



Finances



Living independently



Mental wellbeing



Physical Health



A part of the Ministry of Defence, that can assist with:

- Urgent help for veterans
- Contact Veterans UK
- Armed Forces Pensions
- Medals and Badges
- Service Records

What they do: They “provide free support for veterans and their families, including a helpline, Veterans Welfare Service, Defence Transition Services and injury/bereavement compensation scheme payments.”

More information on the services they provide and how they might help can be found on their website:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/veterans-uk>

Contact them via general enquiries:

Email: veterans-uk@mod.gov.uk
 Freephone (UK only: 0808 1914 2 18
 Telephone (from overseas): +44 1253 866 043
 Their current opening hours are 8.00 am to 4.00 pm Monday to Friday. Please email them for enquiries outside these times.

Armed Forces Pension enquiries:

UK: 0800 085 3600 From Overseas: 0044 141 224 3600

Medals enquiries:

Email: DBS-Medals@mod.gov.uk
 Phone: Veterans UK Helpline 0808 1914 2 18

Service Records and Subject Access Request enquiries

Please refer to their website page:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/requests-for-personal-data-and-service-records>



An illustrated introduction to how British industries, supported by thousands of newly recruited women, strove to meet the nation's wartime need for munitions, armour, shipping, uniforms and aircraft.

During the Second World War (1939–45), Britain stretched every sinew of its industrial might to fend off a Nazi invasion. As the nation stood alone against Fortress Europe, it harnessed, coordinated and maximised its resources, firstly to defend itself and then to help liberate Axis-occupied countries. Wartime Industry uses informative text and beautiful illustrations to show how the men and women of Britain met this unprecedented demand for military and home-front materials. It explores the work of Lord Beaverbrook's highly organised Ministry of Aircraft Production; the 'Shadow Factories' that enabled manufacturers such as Vauxhall and Rootes to make tanks and aircraft; the Royal Ordnance Factories that produced firearms and explosives; the 'Bevin Boys' conscripted to work in the coal mines; the Women's Timber Corps; and war workers – who, together, helped the nation to make it.

Military Wives Choirs

In January (2022) the Military Wives Choirs announced the start of a year-long research project with Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) which sees a unique partnership between the Veterans and Families Institute for Military Social Research (VFI) and the Cambridge Institute for Music Therapy Research (CIMTR). Thanks to a grant from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust's Tackling Loneliness & Isolation programme, the research aims to uncover barriers to joining a choir faced by women in the (widest) military community and aims to produce a monitoring tool to enable the charity to evaluate the impact a choir has for its members.

As both an independent charity and subsidiary of SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity, the Military Wives Choirs work collaboratively with SSAFA in their mission to provide support to our Forces and their families; and as such are delighted to be working with Anglia Ruskin University to expand their

understanding of the barriers women face in accessing the service they offer.

If you would like to find out more about the work of the VFI or the CIMTR, you can do so via their own websites online. To find out more about the Military Wives Choirs, visit their website: www.militarywiveschoirs.org.

Of themselves, the Military Wives Choirs say: “With 72 choirs and nearly 2,000 members in British military bases across the UK and overseas, the Military Wives Choirs is a charity that brings all women in the military community closer together and empowers them through singing. The emphasis is on all women: the choirs contain wives of serving personnel, along with those currently serving, veterans, mothers, sisters and daughters, and others with a military connection.”

Please contact the Military Wives Choirs direct if you are interested in their research and/or in joining a choir.



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM FOR

THE CHARITY THAT 'SUPPORTS WOMEN WHO SERVED' (Charity Registration: WRAC Association, 206184)

I WISH TO APPLY FOR ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP
(UK-resident: £10 per year; Overseas resident: £15 per year)

Please complete this form in **BLOCK LETTERS**

Miss/Mrs/Ms/Other: Surname:

First Names: Known as:

Surname when serving: Post nominals:

Address for Correspondence:

.....

..... Post Code:

Telephone No(s): Date of Birth:

Email:

Local Branch (if known): Area:

Please indicate your preferred method of contact?:

(Your copy of the Lioness magazine will be posted to you unless you advise otherwise)

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS INCLUDE:

- 2 copies of Lioness magazine per year
- Events, Friendship and Support through HQ, Area Co-ordinators and 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)
- Priority booking for WRAC Association and other events
- Various updates from HQ and Areas via letter or email

The WRAC Association holds data in order to carry out its 'legitimate business activities' - these include running an efficient and effective Membership organisation that "supports women who served" by encouraging "comradeship, esprit de corps, benevolence and preserving traditions" (ie friendship, community and support). Personal Data is processed for WRAC Association purposes only

- including the organising of events, editing and distribution of the Lioness members' magazine, and linking individuals with Headquarters and Area Co-ordinators, by post, email and telephone - and is not shared with any third party individual or organisation. In line with the Association's charitable status, and for the purposes of GDPR, the 'Association' includes Headquarters and Area Co-ordinators (it does not include individual WRAC branches). Please be assured that we do NOT share your information with any third-party individual or organisation. Please contact the WRAC Association by post or email if you have any queries.

Please tick here ☐ if you do NOT want your contact details shared with your regional Area Co-ordinator:

Signature Date

Association Membership is not exclusive to those who served as ATS, WRAC and/or signed-up pre 1992. Membership is also open to those still serving under any cap badge. Please share the following information with the Association if you wish:

Army Number Last Rank Held:
(Present Rank if still serving)

Date of Enrolment: Date of Release:

Membership Subscription Payment:

I wish to Join as:

UK-resident Member Y / N (*) £10 per year OR £50 for 5 years (*)

Non UK-resident Member Y / N (*) £15 per year OR £75 for 5 years (*)

(Overseas Members are asked to pay an additional £5.00 per year to cover postage of *Lioness* magazine)

(*) Please indicate which Membership type you are applying for

I wish to make an additional donation: Y / N Amount £.....

Total amount: £

Method of payment (please tick appropriate box):

☐ **I have joined/will join online and set up an automatic credit/debit card subscription**
To join the association online go to www.wraca.org.uk/join

☐ I enclose Cheque for £
(All cheques must be in **sterling** and made payable to "**WRAC Association**")

☐ I will set up a **Bank Standing Order / Direct Debit** £
(please phone the Association HQ Office for a form and/or assistance)

GIFT AID DECLARATION

Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate

Gift Aid is reclaimed by the charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address is needed to identify you as a current UK taxpayer.

In order to Gift Aid your donation you must tick the box below:

☐ I want to Gift Aid my donation of £_____ and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to: WRAC Association Charity Number 206184

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

If you are a non UK tax payer or do not wish to sign this declaration it would still be good to hear from you. If this is the case please complete name and address above and tick below:

☐ I do not wish to complete this Gift Aid Declaration and/or

☐ I am a non UK tax payer or do not pay enough Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax to make it worthwhile.

Please notify the WRAC Association if you want to cancel this declaration, change your name or home address or your circumstances change (eg you no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains or you can now gift aid donations)

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM, AND PAYMENT, TO:

WRAC ASSOCIATION, Unit 11 Basepoint, 1 Winnall Valley Road, Winchester, Hants, SO23 0LD

If you have any queries: Please telephone: 0300-400-1992.
Or visit our website: wraca.org.uk Or email: info@wraca.org.uk

Association Notices A - Z

Change of Address. Please remember to notify us of any change of address. Every time Lioness is distributed a number of copies are returned as we are unaware that Members have moved.



Donations. You can send a donation to the Association at any time. More information can be found inside this edition. 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). Due to the size of recent Lioness editions we have been unable to offer this service. However, we continue to keep it on file and will resume as, when and if it is possible.



Lioness. Articles for inclusion in the next edition of Lioness must be received by **14th NOVEMBER 2022**. Please email direct to editor@wraca.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 available to purchase online via the website, by post or by phone.



Remembrance. By tradition 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, via the RBL, and for Remembrance in Guildford. Tickets are open to any member of the WRAC Association who wishes to attend, prior attendance or Branch participation are not a prerequisite.



At going to press we confirm the dates for 2022 are:

Thu 10 Nov 2022 Field of Remembrance, Westminster Abbey. This will be ticketed – please apply to the HQ Office if you wish to attend.

Sun 13 Nov 2022 Cenotaph Parade. This is always ticketed. Ticket applications for 2022 have now closed. Enquiries to HQ Office/Tanya via letter or email (office.manager@wraca.org.uk) Please note that the RBL's criteria for this Parade, is that 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 13 Nov 2022 Guildford Borough Remembrance events. As one of only two Regiments that have Freedom of the Borough this is a very symbolic venue for the Association.

Sun 13 Nov 2022 Westminster Abbey Service – Enquire of HQ Office/Tanya what 2022's arrangements may be for this service, but requests will need to be made to the office if you are interested, by email (office.manager@wraca.org.uk) or letter only.

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

Guildford – We are invited each year to the Service of Remembrance in Guildford (the 'mother' city of the WRAC Association). 2022 is hugely important as it is the 30th anniversary of the Corps' disbandment. Please register your interest in attending with HQ Office; space in the church is limited. Please enquire of the Association Office for 2022's details – by email (office.manager@wraca.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.



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.



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



For your convenience, we now offer an annual debit/credit card subscription service, so you'll never forget your subs again. See Member Log-in area of the Association website or telephone HQ office manager on 0300-400-1992. (No discounts apply).

WRAC Dinner Club. The WRAC Dinner Club meets every year on the second Saturday in October (Saturday 8th October 2022), 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 19th November 2022 at The Victory Services Club. For more details email wracofficersdc@gmail.com or visit the Facebook Closed Group 'WRAC Officers' Dining Club'.

WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

HELD SATURDAY 19TH MARCH 2022 Queen's Hotel, Leeds (and streamed live on Facebook)

Present:	Fiona Gardner CBE	Vice president
	Rowena Naile MBE	Chair of Membership Council
	Isabel McCord	Chair of Benevolent Fund Grants Committee
	Barbara Davies	Treasurer
	Paula Rogers	Chief Executive Officer
	Penny Muxworthy	Association Secretary & Editor of Lioness

101 members, including 3 Life Vice presidents, 6 Trustees and 4 Area Co-ordinators
Plus 30 via Facebook Live (and 1.5k 'views' at time of publishing) currently available at:
<https://www.facebook.com/wracassociation/videos/716075386228406/>

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending this the first in-person AGM for 3 years, welcomed those joining via Facebook live-stream, reminded everyone of the purpose of the AGM, and introduced the Management Board, HQ staff team and trustees

The Chairman updated on progress following the strategy review and re-structuring of the Association, and reflected on her first year and future challenges under 6 headings:

- **Change:**
A new Vice president, new CEO and structure; new responsibilities for Membership Council.
- **Productive:**
Throughout the pandemic the Association has continued to deliver its core outputs - The Lioness, dedication of the WRAC Statue at the NMA, GR22, benevolence, new-look website, governance.
- **Ambitious:**
New work taking place in to increase our influence, allowing us to ensure that the c100k former ATS/WRAC servicewomen who are not WRACA members, but still eligible for benevolence support, are represented when decisions are made. We intend to influence the charity sector, the MOD, the Services and central Government. We are having an impact: female veterans are on the political agenda.
- **Responsive:**
The Association has responded to change with new ways of working, of communicating, and of supporting each other. The pandemic has thrown up opportunities and innovative approaches, such as the Buddy Buddy scheme. Planning in the pandemic required a flexible and adaptable mindset – something to retain as we move forward.
- **Positive:**
We now foster a culture of continual improvement. Whatever we do; our mantra should be 'that was great, how can we make it better' and 'what do you want from your Association'? This approach guides the Trustees and Membership Council, is underpinned by the Staff; and informed by the members.
- **Purpose:**
The Chairman hoped we can all share a sense of purpose in delivering for each other, supporting each other, and working to make things better.

The Chairman read out **Messages from the Association's Patron and President** including:
Thanks and best wishes from HM The Queen and HRH The Duchess of Kent.

2. Apologies for Absence.

Apologies were received from: Lady Martha Bruce and Nicky Moffat (Life VPs), Amanda Hassell (Trustee) and 27 Members.

3. Confirmation of 2021 Minutes.

The Association Secretary confirmed that Minutes of the previous meeting, held March 2021, had been published in Lioness 2021/2; no comments had been received.

Proposal: It was proposed that the Chairman sign the minutes of the 2021 AGM as a true record.

Proposed: Mary Woollard

Seconded: Shan Veillard-Thomas

Agreed: All

They were signed as correct by the Chairman.

4. **Business Arising from the Previous Minutes.** There was no business arising.

5. **Governance Report.** As reported by the Vice President, highlighting:
Trustees have met 3 times since the last AGM, including at an away day.
Governance Audit completed with positive outcome.
Ali Brown and Nicky Moffat have stepped down as Trustees.
Skills audit of Trustees will be conducted to inform future trustee recruitment plan.
Barbara Davies, Treasurer, has declared her intention to step down this summer. The Chairman thanked her for the last 8 years; and announced that Tim Savage will assume the role of Treasurer this summer.
The Association is seeking engaged and enthusiastic individuals (not just those who served as Officers) to step up to serve as trustees.
The activities of the Association over the past 12 months are detailed in the Annual Report.

6. **Membership Council Report.** As reported by the Chair of Membership Council, highlighting:
Dedication of the WRAC statue last summer.
349 members gathered for 2022 Grand Reunion.
Areas are reminded that they should hold an annual Area Reunion.

The Membership Council met 3 times in the last year, including an away-day which:

- identified barriers to our veterans joining and considered how we could overcome them.
- considered how the membership package can suit both current members and also attract those who are eligible to join but currently do not, remembering that potential members can come from the Regular Army and the TA.
- identified members like to meet with others that share similar activities and interests in groups which the Association is happy to advertise, whether they are Association-run groups, or not.

The Chair of MC reminded everyone that the Membership Council includes representation from the Life Vice Presidents and the Ben Fund Chairman along with all Area Coordinators, who are a vital link between the local level, Membership Council and Association HQ. She asked those in the East Midlands area to consider volunteering for the vacant post of Area Co-ordinator.

7. **Benevolence Fund Report:** As reported by the Ben Fund Chairman, highlighting:

Activities of the Ben Fund in pages 4 – 9 of the Annual Report.

The impact of Covid-19 on case numbers and the amount distributed – both fell, primarily due to ongoing lockdowns.

At their February meeting the Trustees agreed to make a 1-off payment of £100 to all beneficiaries on maintenance grants to help with the rising cost of living and to help prevent them having to choose between heating and eating.

The Ben Fund Chair updated members on the Combat Stress research which will enable service providers, such as the NHS and Local Authorities, to understand how best to adapt services and improve accessibility, as well as help the Association to support Benevolent Fund beneficiaries and members of the Association.

Looking Forward - the Benevolent Fund is:

- Reviewing our Grant Giving Criteria.
- Promoting the Ben Fund and the help it can offer through the posters and media.

8. **Influence Report:** As reported by the Vice President, highlighting:

The Trustees November away day which ensured clarity of purpose and worked through what the Association influence strategy should be.

To influence outcomes WRACA needs to be listened to and actively consulted. Be credible, stay in lane; and have developed, evidenced positions in place.

WRACA will prioritise loneliness, historic hurt related to Terms of Service, pensions and health.

Where appropriate, members will be consulted and data collated substantiate our position.

WRACA has been consulted by Combat Stress and RAND Europe in the development of research bids relating to female veterans' issues.

Key body is the Cobseo female veterans cluster group. The Vice President, Ali Brown and Nicky Murdoch are part of the Executive which has delivered in the past year:

- 'We Also Served Report'
- Engagement with the Office for Veterans Affairs, with Ministers and the Veterans Advisory Board, which led to prioritisation of female veterans needs in the OVA Veterans Action Plan.
- Revised governance, updating TORs and structure
- The Cluster Campaign Plan
- Consultation and engagement on research priorities

Membership of the Cobseo Exec comprises CEOs of member charities, by election. The Trustees are keen that the Association has a seat at that table.

The Chairman sits on the ABF grants committee, and on the Army Charities Advisory Board. Recent issues discussed included the female narrative and addressing female veterans needs as part of setting the conditions for future Army recruiting.

9. Annual Report & Accounts: As reported by the Treasurer who highlighted:
Auditors Rothmans found the 2021 accounts to be in good order, no outstanding actions to be taken.
For the second year in a row overall expenditure exceeded income. See Page 5 of the Accounts.
The total value of funds (Association and Benevolent Fund combined) as at 30 Sep 21 were just under £9M, an increase of £1,436,328 from 2020. The total value of investments as at 15 Mar 22 are £8.2M.
The Association has again been fortunate to receive generous donations and legacies totalling £34,875 (between Assoc and Ben Fund) – details found in the Annual Report.
Investment Dividends and Deposit interest returns for the year were down £20,491 on last year (see Notes 3 and 10 of the Annual Accounts).
The Statement of Financial Activities and the Balance Sheet for the year ending 30 Sep 21 will be published in Lioness edition 2022#2.

10. Resolutions. There were no **Trustee/Membership Council (a) or Branch (b) Proposals**

11. Guest Speaker – Lt Gen Sir Nick Pope KCB CBE, via videolink.
The Chairman introduced the former Deputy Chief of the General Staff, Master of Signals, and new Chair of Cobseo, whose main points included:

Military and veterans' communities are changing, predicting 1/3 reduction in serving personnel over next decade, increase in veterans from 2.3m to 6m, reduction in government funding, meaning charities picking up more.

Key Sectors where Cobseo provides support:

- Future communities – Government plans 30% women in military by 2030 ("30/30"). Very ambitious and hard to achieve. Create more female communities for support, networks, etc. Military charity partnership working is key.
- Current serving cohort – includes sustaining and promoting women working and advancing in military careers. Can be supported through links between veterans and serving females.
- Female veterans – they are often a minority in larger groups. Need to promote inclusion of minority groups in larger veterans' groups.

12. Any Other Business. Items raised included:

- Women need to take ownership of themselves being veterans, be loud and proud to wear the veteran's badge and highlight that veterans are not determined by 'combat' service, length of service or number of medals.
- Concern about the lack of profile with the Land Train commentary at the NMA
- Action: HQ to raise with NMA
- Whether the WRACA, having worked with NHS England and Anglia Ruskin University, will work with each UK Devolved government which has its own responsibilities for veterans.
- Response: Discussions with NHS England are at their invitation. Similar conversations will take place with NHS in devolved nations when appropriate.
- Request to upload all relevant external reports to WRACA website.
- Action: HQ to upload as appropriate.
- Increase promotion that Association Membership is open to all women who served pre- and post-1992 (per Constitution).
- Action: HQ to promote understanding that all are welcome.
- Request for Benevolence Funds to fund respite holidays/breaks for members and their families.
- Action: HQ to promote eligible Benevolent Fund categories.
- Can the Association be part of the Army's 'leaving' booklet?
- Response: Only active corps/regiments' associations can be included.
- All branches reminded to let Association HQ office know if they have a Standard and submit the name of their standard bearer.
- Action: Branches to contact HQ with information.

13. The Date and Time of Next Meeting is the 2023 AGM on Saturday 18th March, at the Victory Services Club, London.

The Meeting closed at 16.00

Signed as a true record.

Chairman:

Date:

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2021

	Notes	Unrestricted			Total Funds Year Ended 30.09.2021 £	Total Funds Year Ended 30.09.2020 £
		General Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £		
INCOME FROM:						
Donations and legacies	1	42,664	-	10,012	52,676	77,688
Charitable activities	2	-	-	-	-	-
Investments	3	36,323	-	179,203	215,526	236,017
Other income	4	9,865	-	279	10,144	12,022
TOTAL INCOME		88,852	-	189,494	278,346	325,727
EXPENDITURE ON:						
Raising funds	6	7,836	-	32,621	40,457	36,702
Charitable activities	7	96,074	-	269,885	365,959	477,864
Total Expenditure		103,910	-	302,506	406,416	514,566
Net Gains / (losses) on investments	10	266,283	-	1,298,115	1,564,398	(177,273)
NET INCOME / (EXPENDITURE)		251,225	-	1,185,103	1,436,328	(366,112)
Transfers between funds	16	14,859	(14,859)	-	-	-
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		266,084	(14,859)	1,185,103	1,436,328	(366,112)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS:						
Total Funds brought forward	19	1,385,969	14,859	6,155,526	7,556,354	7,922,466
Total funds carried forward		1,652,053	-	7,340,629	8,992,682	7,556,354

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2021

	Notes	2021 £	2020 £
FIXED ASSETS			
Intangible assets	8	11,994	13,887
Tangible assets	9	4,528	1,651
Investments	10	8,901,216	7,426,275
		<u>8,917,738</u>	<u>7,441,813</u>
CURRENT ASSETS			
Stock	11	5,782	6,592
Debtors	12	31,776	70,914
Cash at bank and in hand	13	67,004	72,893
		<u>104,562</u>	<u>150,399</u>
LIABILITIES			
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	14	29,618	35,858
		<u>29,618</u>	<u>35,858</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS		74,944	114,541
TOTAL NET ASSETS		<u>8,992,682</u>	<u>7,556,354</u>
FUNDS OF THE CHARITY			
Restricted Funds:			
The Benevolent Funds	17	7,340,629	6,155,526
The WRAC Statue Fund	18	-	-
Unrestricted funds:			
General Funds	19	1,652,053	1,385,969
Designated funds:			
Membership life subscription fund	16	-	14,859
TOTAL FUNDS	19	<u>8,992,682</u>	<u>7,556,354</u>

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 8 Feb 22 and were signed on its behalf by:


Brigadier (Retired) Fiona Gardner CBE, Chairman

Letters.....

Thought members may like to see this photograph taken at Dame Vera Lynne's memorial service of 2 Royal Hospital Chelsea In-pensioners and IP Carol Knight (ex-WRAC, ex-68Sqn RCT and WRAC Association member)

Melanie Southcombe-Tate



Does anyone have any more information or photos of my nan? She was Patricia Cowie, served in the WRAC and her army number was (W/)420407. She was from Salford, started in Guildford and served in the Sergeants' Mess, and I think she was in Woolwich, London, too. She met my grandad there and he was in a motorbike display team. They left around 1965, I think.



I have this photo, which has some other ladies' names on.

Kindest Regards

Georgia Lyons

[Editor: Please get in touch with the HQ Office if you are able to help and we will put you in touch with Georgia either through email or Facebook. And/or perhaps you recognise yourself or someone else in this photo].

The Poetry Pill

I am Luis Lozano, a veteran, English teacher by profession, but an ex-infantryman at heart. I served in Northern Ireland 1988-1990 and Cyprus (Gulf War I 1990-1991). I attended Combat Stress for PTSD 30 years after serving but have found painting and poetry to be the greatest benefits to my 'dark moods'.

I want to help other veterans and would like to send a copy of The Poetry Pill to veterans to help them articulate their feelings through poetry, which is in itself therapy for them. Before they know it, veterans have written enough to create an anthology, to keep to themselves, or to share with the world. Either way, poetry is talking, and it is good to talk.

I am not after anything, I just want to help others; The Poetry Pill is free. Just email us at admin@mrlsonlineenglish.com and we will email you a copy. Unfortunately I can't post the document to people as it would be too expensive.

The Poetry Pill - it's First Aid for veterans' mental health.

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@wraca.org.uk
Benevolence: benfund@wraca.org.uk Lioness: editor@wraca.org.uk
Website: www.wraca.org.uk





WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2023

The 2023 AGM will be held in the Carisbrooke Hall, Victory Services Club, 63/79 Seymour Street, London, W2 2HF on Saturday 18th March 2023, commencing at 14.00. Any Branch/Group Secretary or HQ Branch member who wishes to submit an item for inclusion in the agenda is to do so by 3rd February 2023 to penny.muxworthy@wraca.org.uk.

TIMETABLE

12:30-13:00	Branch/Group Secretaries Meeting (balcony of the Carisbrooke Hall)
14:00	AGM
15:30	Afternoon tea (for Association members only, must be pre-booked)

AGENDA - DRAFT:

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks
2. Apologies for Absence
3. Confirmation of 2022 Minutes
4. Business Arising
5. Governance Report
6. Membership Council Report
7. Benevolent Fund Report
8. Influence Report
9. Annual Report and Accounts
10. Resolutions
 - a. Trustee/Membership Council
 - b. Branch
11. Guest Speaker –
12. Any Other Business
13. Date of Next Meeting – Saturday 16th March 2024

Refreshments: Afternoon tea will be served on completion of the AGM. This is only available to WRAC Association members who have pre-booked by completing the form below.

Return to: WRAC Association, Unit 11, Basepoint, 1 Winnall Valley Road, Winchester, SO23 0LD by 24th February 2023, or email to office.manager@wraca.org.uk.

Wherever possible please book online - wraca.org.uk/agm

I wish to attend the AGM and afternoon tea on Saturday 18th March 2023 at the Victory Services Club, London:

Surname: First Name (known as):

Email:

Tel No:

Address:

..... Post Code:

Please tick as appropriate:

- ☐ I wish to attend the AGM and afternoon tea.
- ☐ I wish to attend the AGM but will not be staying for afternoon tea.

Dietary Requirements:

WRAC Association PR-briefing form

The Association's new PR contract, with Curious PR (*), is focusing on 'local' stories and individuals, to promote the Association and Members to and through local press and media. The aim is to help Branches and Areas promote who they are, what they do, who they support and how others can get involved. This information needs to be sent to HQ office, who will share with Curious PR, who will liaise with the Branch, individual(s) and/or Area direct, all the while keeping HQ updated.

Branch / Area:	
Name(s) of Participant(s): (If there are more participants than will fit here, please continue on second sheet)	
Contact information for participants: (If there are more participants than will fit here, please continue on second sheet). Please ensure you have the individual(s) permission to be contacted first.	
Brief outline of story – What, Why, How (couple of sentences will do)	
When is it happening / did it happen?	
Your local press and media (Curious PR can find this out but you might be able to quickly make suggestions)	

We know there are many wonderful things happening out there, things that Support Women who Served / Serve; Support that has been given/received by/through the Benevolence Fund. This is your opportunity to let others know about it – and get more women who served on board.

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO WRAC Association

Email: penny.muxworthy@wraca.org.uk

Post: Unit 11, Basepoint, Winnall Valley Road, Winchester, Hants, SO23 0LD

(*) Curious PR are a professional public relations company with whom the WRAC Association first partnered in 2017 to help raise the profile of the Association, the ATS & WRAC Benevolent Fund, and all that they both offer to women who have served, or continue to serve, in the British military, specifically Army. This partnership is ongoing.



WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION



LEGACY & DONATIONS FORM

Leaving a Legacy donation to the WRAC Association is an extremely tax efficient way of supporting the Association (which is a registered charity) into the future.

The key facts:

- * A legacy costs NOTHING in your lifetime.
- * You can make a gift of any size: there is no minimum or maximum amount.
- * Even a modest gift will have a huge impact.
- * You do not have to be a millionaire or wealthy to leave a legacy.
- * A gift can be a specified amount or a percentage of the residue of your estate, after you have provided for family and friends.
- * You can specify where you want your money to be directed.
- * A legacy can reduce the inheritance tax liability on your estate.
- * You can change your mind at any point.

Whilst there is no requirement to do so, it would be helpful to the Association if you would complete the form below giving details of your intended legacy/donation and return it to the Association Secretary. This would be for information purposes only and will be treated with total discretion.

I wish to give the sum of £ _____, or _____% of my residual estate, to the WRAC Association (Registered Charity Number 206184).

FROM :

Your Full Name: _____ Title: _____

Address: _____

Post code: _____ Telephone: _____

Your Signature: _____ Date: _____

PLEASE ENSURE YOU SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH YOUR SOLICITOR.

Making a Donation to the WRAC Association is a simple and easy way of showing additional support for the Association. Donations are invaluable in enabling the Association to do all it does in 'Supporting Women Who Served'.

If you wish to make a donation (whether regular or one-off) you can do so by:

- * **Using this form, or**
- * **Going to our website (Website: www.wraca.org.uk/donate)**

DONATION and CHARITY GIFT AID DECLARATION

Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate

Gift Aid is reclaimed by the charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address is needed to identify you as a current UK taxpayer.

In order to Gift Aid your donation you must tick the box below:

☐ I want to Gift Aid my donation of £_____ and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to:
WRAC Association Charity Number 206184

☐ I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

My Details: Title First name or initial(s) Surname

Full Home address

Postcode..... Email address Date

To make a regular monthly or annual donation please either visit our website or your Bank to arrange a Direct Debit, using the prefix DON and your surname as a reference.

Please notify the WRAC Association if you:

- want to cancel this declaration
- change your name or home address
- no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains

If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

If you are a non-UK tax payer or do not wish to sign this declaration it would still be good to hear from you. If this is the case please complete name and address above and tick below:

☐ I do not wish to complete this Gift Aid Declaration and/or

☐ I am a non UK tax payer or do not pay enough Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax to make it worthwhile.

**Return to: The Association Secretary, WRAC Association, Unit 11 Basepoint,
1 Winnall Valley Road, Winchester, Hants, SO23 0LD**

Tel: 0300-400-1992 Email: office.manager@wraca.org.uk

