

LIONESS

SUPPORTING WOMEN WHO SERVED



Still marching after all these years



IN THIS EDITION

WE REMEMBERED THEM

WORLD WAR 2
CONSCRIPTION

EVENTS
PAST AND FUTURE

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



There is a touch of déjà vu as I write this; another Covid variant, more restrictions (temporary we hope) and another vaccination campaign. At least we managed our Remembrance activities. A bright and sunny day at the Field of Remembrance and a fantastic contingent marching at the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday. Well done to everyone who took part. I hope everyone has been able to enjoy Christmas this year; and that the booster will do the trick and we can surmount this bump in the road and continue our path to normality. Please continue to take care, we have come so far.

I am settling into my role and have been building connections to take forward the work to increase our influence in the military charity arena. The NHS Steering Group (co-chaired by our Life VP Ali Brown) is taking forward the actions from the 'We Also Served' Report. The MOD have published their response to the Sarah Atherton House of Commons Defence Select Committee Report into Women in the Armed Forces, a report that over 4,000 serving female personnel and female veterans contributed to. It raises serious questions on the culture in the Armed Forces and has generated impetus both politically and within the Armed Forces to make a difference. Combat Stress have also published their research, based on our members' responses, which reinforced the issues and challenges facing female veterans. So female veterans' issues are a 'hot topic', receiving attention and resource. Now is the time for us to participate in the debate and try to achieve improvements for all female veterans.

Key on this journey was the Trustees Away Day in November where we agreed the aims, outcomes and priorities for 'Influence', providing me with clear direction as we move forward. I thought I would just outline what I am actually doing, and why.

Influence is a somewhat nebulous concept; for me it is about being informed, coherent and credible, being able to provide insight and evidence, and being in the room for the discussions that count. Our agreed aims are:

- The inclusion of women as a factor in policy development and strategy formulation.
- Better outcomes for women especially in the areas of health and welfare, finance and pensions, housing and employment.
- Better recognition for female veterans.

So how do we go about achieving these aims? The Trustees identified the key stakeholders and decision-making fora who could achieve these outcomes, and we looked at where we should seek representation. We identified Cobseo as the key organisation that could effect change within the wider military charity arena, and the Army as our key Service stakeholder. I am now active on the Executive of the Cobseo Female Veterans Cluster Group, and we are developing a campaign plan to take the sector toward more inclusive, accessible and tailored support for female veterans. The plan was discussed at the Cobseo Exec Away Day in December, and we have their full support, and the possibility of some funding to help pull the plan together. I have been invited by the Deputy Chief of the General Staff to join the Army Charities Advisory Board, where I very much look forward to representing all female veterans.

Key to actually achieving our aims will be ensuring we have informed, evidence backed positions on key issues affecting female veterans. That will require data, and thus research. As we move forward, and as we come to you with requests to participate in research, if you can help, please do.

While I am busy developing the Influence objective, Rowena is taking forward membership issues as Chair of the Membership Council. I am conscious I am less visible at ground roots level than Ali was, but I hope you are getting used to our new structure and roles. If Rowena is not available for your events then we have other Trustees who you can call upon, just contact Penny in the office for details.

I very much look forward to our Grand Reunion weekend in Leeds. We have an

opportunity at the AGM to update you all on a raft of issues, and most importantly we have the Reunion Dinner and other events to enjoy. See you there.

Fiona Gardner

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Front cover:
The ATS march on Leeds in 1943, and the WRAC Association march at the Cenotaph in 2021

EDITORIAL



A Happy New Year to you all, and a warm welcome to this first Lioness edition for 2022. You have all certainly been enjoying the lifting of restrictions over the summer and autumn, as evidenced in your various reports and submissions. Thank you.

In looking forward to this year's Grand Reunion, in Leeds, we share some photographs on past events in Leeds with the ATS. Perhaps you have memories of these events as well. More updated information on the GR is also included – along with the sad announcement that we are unable to hold a Parade after the Sunday morning service.

We celebrate the stories of the remarkable ladies who were 'conscripted' into the ATS in 1941; along with those who have celebrated their 100th birthdays, Buddy Buddy stories, Dedication of the new ATS & WRAC bench in Northern Ireland, and much more.

And we continue to honour all those who have joined the Parade Ground 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 march at the Cenotaph and Guildford in November, and more. We love receiving your news, updates, memories and requests for 'where are you now', etc. Please send your entries in by 1st June for the next edition and remember:

- Send in good quality photographs – and try to limit them to the best (in quality and quantity).

- 'Attach' photographs to emails / articles, 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.

We are constantly trying to make the Lioness the best it can be and to reflect your news, views and interests and so hopefully you helping us will enable us to help and 'support' you. So send in your ideas and suggestions for the future.

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

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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.

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

Chairman of the Membership Council Foreword



2022 is going to be a busy year for the Members of the Association with the Grand Reunion in Leeds coming up in March, and events in Great Yarmouth in May and again at the National Memorial Arboretum in July, not to mention the myriad of branch and area events being planned to keep you all in touch with each other.

As the Covid restrictions eased over the summer and autumn I was very pleased to be able to get out and meet lots of you at a number of events - the West Midlands Area Reunion, the Field of Remembrance and the Birmingham Branch Christmas Jumper Lunch. It was so uplifting to see so many of our members enjoying the comradeship that is an important part of the Association membership. In addition, I attended a number of events that were organised by some of our fantastic ladies - the WRAC Veterans Cycle Club weekend, the WRAC Dinner Club and the WRAC Officers and Sandhurst Sisterhood Dinner Club - all of which were great fun. The one thing that is evident is that the esprit de corps is ever present and that we all know how to have a very good time!

In my foreword in the last edition of the Lioness I mentioned that the Membership Council was going to be brainstorming the way to take forward membership and ensure we are providing what you as the members want. The key area that we looked at was 'barriers to joining the Association', as I am sure that you all have friends from when you served who either do not want to join or do not know we exist. Having identified the barriers we are now working to improve the situation to encourage more of those

ATS and WRAC (both regular and TA) to join the Association so that they can benefit from the comradeship that we are able to provide. These changes need to be implemented by all of us as we all represent the Association (especially to those who are not members yet) - the Membership Council, the Association HQ and the areas, branches and individual members. Some of the suggestions for tackling the barriers that we wish to take forward are:

- Communicate that anyone who served can join the Association
- A new Members Pack to be more attractive and to include an Association brooch, events calendar, constitution, etc

- Offer a variety of timings/days for local branch meetings
- Create non-geographical branches - e.g. interests, serving decades, trades, operations
- Investigate ideas for different events and activities
- Incentivise branch members to bring new people - rewards and prizes

At the Grand Reunion there will be boards for members to make suggestions of what new branches/activities/events you would like to see take place at a national level. For those of you not attending or who want to pass on their views asap, please send me an email with your views - rowena.naile@wrac.org.uk.

I am looking forward to meeting many more of you either at the Grand Reunion or at your area or branch events - so please do invite me!!

Rowena Naile

Congratulations Rowena!

If there's one thing the Association needs to head up the Membership Council, it's a woman who knows how to run things, and Rowena Naile has once again proven her ability to do that. Saturday November 13th saw our Membership Council chairman compete in the Test Way Ultra Marathon – not for the faint hearted. Starting on the Linkenholt Estate in north Hampshire and finishing in Totton in the south of the county, the 52 miles are as challenging as they are beautiful, but Rowena completed a fantastic run, finishing the course in 8hrs 45 minutes, making her 1st female with a lead of 1hr 6 mins on the next woman in the race. Coming 11th overall, she is pictured here receiving her winner's trophy. Congratulations from the Lioness team Rowena!



Rowena receives trophy



Rowena's trophy

Events

THE GOVERNOR'S REVIEW, ROYAL HOSPITAL CHELSEA Tuesday 3rd August 2021

Due to Covid and their understandable need to keep in-pensioners and staff safe and well the Royal Hospital Chelsea's annual Founder's Day in June was revised with Regimental Associations being invited to The Governor's Review ...

I had the pleasure of representing the WRAC Association at The Governor's Review for Founders Day at the Royal Hospital Chelsea. On arrival a Covid test was given to all those attending the event.

It was a beautiful day and I arrived in good time to have a wander around before the event took place. It was an honour to watch the Chelsea Pensioners on parade, particularly the ladies. They all looked fabulous in their new lightweight scarlets.

The parade was followed by an outdoor BBQ and buffet enjoyed by all. It was whilst in the queue I started talking to a military policewoman who just happened to say her mother was ex WRAC. Now who could that be I thought? It was none other than the lovely Sadie Kemp's daughter Lara! Of course, I took a selfie and pinged it across to Sadie.

It was wonderful to chat with our in-pensioners after the parade especially after the tough year they've all had with Covid restrictions. I said my farewells and walked with Pat Rosewell to Sloane Square underground station before parting.

Thank you for the opportunity to attend this event, I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Wendy Hooton



Wendy Hooton & Pat Rosewell



Wendy with Marjorie Cole



Wendy with Carole Knight



Wendy with Lara Kemp



Wendy with Helen Morse



Monica Parrott on Parade



Wendy with Jean Simmons



Wendy with Monica Parrott



WRAC reps group photo with Marjorie Cole



Wendy & Pat at Sloane Square



On Parade

CYCLEFEST 2021

WRAC Veterans CycleFest returned to Kent for a second year with many ladies attending again and some new faces taking part for the first time. The weekend was held near Tenterden, at Liz King and Ali Steed's house, in August and brought together a keen group of cyclists and gate keeper Van Whitehall. Van holds the fort while the groups cycle over the weekend and looks after any dogs that are staying.

Friday evening started with a new addition this year, creating some healthy competition with a 4.2 mile time trial. Everyone seemed unsure at the start, especially being held up by Ali on their bike before Liz counted them down, but that uncertainty evaporated as soon as they were let loose, and the old Army competitiveness took over. Rowena Naile blasted the field and completed the route in a cracking time of 13:21, but all the ladies loved this new aspect of the weekend and it will return again in 2022.

Friday also saw the traditional fish-and-chip supper held around the campfire in the garden at CycleFest HQ. On offer is camping, either in tents or in campervans parked in the garden, and there is also accommodation in both the house and the safari lodge, so there is plenty of room for about 30-40 people.

Saturday saw three groups taking to the roads of Kent taking on slightly different routes. Ali led the group which took them to the Brenzett Aeronautical Museum which was a hidden gem. From the outside it doesn't look as exciting as it is inside and is certainly an Aladdin's cave of military memories.

Nina, a local firefighter in Liz's triathlon team stepped in to help this year, and helped Liz take a larger group on a longer route of over 40 miles to Dungeness and surrounding area before finishing the ride at the local pub Kingshead in Shadoxhurst.

Saturday evening saw the posse travel the short distance to the Pig & Sty pub for an evening meal out. This year we had a side room to ourselves, and just as well as the volume rose as the camaraderie grew.

Sunday was a shorter ride with all groups heading to Headcorn Aerodrome for a general gander at the planes and, by special request from the previous year's group, a sausage roll. The finish of the ride again was back at the local pub. The evening was finished off with pizza around the campfire as we chatted late into the night.

Most of the ladies left late morning on Monday, which gave us plenty of time for a leisurely breakfast accompanied by cheese scones made by Ali the night before. All in all, a great weekend! So much so, that in 2022 the ladies have requested the event is extended to an entire week and will include walking, kayaking, stand-up paddleboarding and open water swimming as well as cycling. Well, it would be rude not to, wouldn't it?

The weekend is great fun and many ladies have already booked for 2022. If you would like to attend please contact Liz@trispiritevents.com, the date is 17 - 23 Aug. We are also keen to encourage ladies to come out to Mallorca with us and spend some time in what is regarded as one of the best places in the world to cycle, and used by many of the pro cycle teams for winter training. Again, please contact Liz for more details.

EAST ANGLIAN BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL Bury St Edmunds

Well, this seemed like a great idea, especially as it was being held in St Edmundsbury Cathedral! Having seen the advert for the festival I read they were asking charities to apply to be a beneficiary of the event. I contacted Penny Muxworthy in WRAC HQ to get the details required for the application we were accepted, hurrah!!

The next task was rounding up some volunteers for the 6 day event. The more hours we volunteered the greater the donation we would receive. I had no idea what that amount may be, but I rounded up 16 volunteers working various hours over the festival period. I went each day, so I was there when our volunteers were working and I also helped set up and close down the event. The hours were clocking up!

We all knuckled down to doing the various tasks, which our military background prepares us for just get on with it! We had dishwasher champions, glass collectors, admin assistants and others serving beer and cider. There was also a Gin & Pimms Bar to encourage ladies to attend. Dawn Amey owned that one! It was amazing and such fun. The nave in the cathedral was filled with kegs of beer and cider. This was a first for the cathedral with the approval of the Dean.





WRAC LIONESS' CARDIFF VIRTUAL 10k

Sadly, the Cardiff 10k was cancelled for the 2nd year running. However, they organised a virtual 10k which people could complete anywhere. Once evidence of completion was received, they sent a t shirt and Cardiff Virtual 10k Medal to individuals.

We had entrants in various towns and cities: Cardiff, Worcester, Weston-Super-Mare, Gloucester, Torquay, Andover, Rutland, Redcar, Romsey, Crawley, Wolverhampton, Birmingham and Bury St Edmunds. It was also great that some could actually go to Cardiff organising their own 10k route.

I had a group in Bury St Edmunds and we were so fortunate with the weather it wasn't a scorcher as in previous years! We enjoyed lunch and desserts at my house afterwards, all washed down with Pimms and other liquid refreshments! My thanks to Helen Davies for tidying my garden, Pat Rosewell for the yummy blueberry cake and Nell Frary for making the salads and Pimms.

It was fabulous to see the photographs of everyone who had completed the 10k and I thank you as always for your support. We raised a magnificent sum of £4,887.50 for the WRAC Association. Thank you so much for your donations through sponsorship, fundraising and out of your own pocket! Huge thanks to our "Armchair Supporters" who can't come to our events but generously make donations.

2022 we are in MANCHESTER for our 10th Anniversary on Sunday 22nd May 2022. Do come and join us, runners, walkers and supporters all welcome, details in this Lioness and in the WRAC LIONESSES FUNDRAISING GROUP on Facebook or contact me on Facebook, Messenger or email wendyhootonski@aol.com.

Many thanks to you all for your continued support, I really appreciate your commitment and efforts in these trying times. Stay safe, best wishes.

Wendy Hooton

On the Sunday we had Beer and Hymns. The festival was in full swing when the clergy distributed hymn sheets to the tables of festival goers. The Dean then led his "congregation" into a wonderful service, the Haverhill Silver Band struck up and everyone sang with great gusto!

There was brilliant entertainment on stage during the week from soloists to groups playing country to classic. The Beatles tribute band were brilliant. We will be back!

There was a cheque presentation for all the benefitting charities, but sadly I was away. Fortunately, one of our volunteers and Eastern Area Coordinator Lyn Hatch was available so kindly went in my place. We received a cheque for £1,300 for the WRAC Association, the most given for other charities. I am absolutely delighted and very grateful to all my volunteers who put in the hours for us to receive this amount.

I'm looking forward to next year and hopefully more people will join our team. Free beer and cider - what's not to like? There are two Premier Inns in town which are both walking distance to the cathedral. If you don't want to work come as a visitor (ask Janet Edwards) and boost the profits! Dates for next year, which will be the 30th East Anglian Beer & Cider Festival, are 14th - 19th June 2022.

Thanks again to all my helpers who are now beer and cider experts!

Wendy Hooton

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Wendy, Diane Walsh, Gwen Greenwood, Pat Rosewell (Mo Bear), Nell Frary (Rosie), Helen Davies



WH & Hannah Hooton



WH & Nell Frary



Diane and Peter Walsh



WH, Helen, Nell, Budgie & Mo, Dian, Gwen, & Peter Walsh



Hannah, Budgie and Helen on the move with Mo Bear!



WH, Budgie & Mo Bear



Diane, Gwen, Nell, Budgie, Hannah & Helen



WH & Budgie commissioning Mo Bear.



WH & Helen



Babs, Wolfie, Kaz & Phyl



Barbara, Marg, Ali, Jane & Denise



Nan Bulman & Mal Fulton



Daphne & Peter Navin



Barbara Davies, Denise Clarke, Jane Griffin-Ash, Ali Brown, Marg Davies



Mal



Cardiff Group - Ali Brown, Lynn Anderson, Heather Bradbury, Kaz Smith, Van Whitehill, Naomi Burden, Linda Armstrong, Babs Anderson, Kath Smith, Phyl Mattinson, Elaine Smith, Barbara Davies



Margaret Styles, Sandy Cawley & Bobbie Coelho



Sandy our Octogenarian

WRAC LIONESSES MASCOT - MO BEAR

It was a special year for Mo Bear our WRAC Lionesses mascot. Mo joined us in 2015, her first run being the Gateshead 10k. Our first run was in Manchester in 2013. She is carried by a different Lioness every year for the annual 10k run/walk. For every run she completes she is promoted.

This year, as a WO1, who better to carry her than ex-WO1 PTI Pat "Budgie" Rosewell. Mo successfully completed the 10k, was ceremoniously commissioned to 2Lt and the celebrations began. Thank you to

Barbara Davies and Leslie Scott for providing the pips. We now had the task of getting her a medal ... I told Mo's story to Danielle, one of the organisers of the Cardiff 10k, and I am happy to say she sent a medal. In return I sent her pictures of Mo proudly wearing her medal and one with all her other medals.

Here's to our 10th anniversary - Manchester we're coming back!! Come and join us, and Mo Bear, on Sunday 22nd May 2022.

Wendy Hooton



PORTRAITS AND BOOK LAUNCH - THE WRAC AT THE NAM 10th November 2021

In an already busy week with Association members up and down the country attending Remembrance parades and services, one more event snuck into the calendar at the National Army Museum. The 10th of November saw several of us descend on Chelsea for an afternoon and evening celebrating the contribution of women in the Army. Two of those in attendance were Chairman of the Membership Council Rowena Naile and Association Finance Officer Julia Doig, who share their experiences of the day for the Lioness.

"It seems a long time ago that the Artist in Residence Programme at the National Army Museum painted the portraits of five members of the WRAC Association, when in fact it was only the summer of 2019. Sitting alongside me at that time were Betty Webb, Wendy Hooton, Pauline Mills, and Cathy Munro. The actual portraits are now part of the National Collection and have spent time hanging up in the museum for all visitors to see. The National Army Museum kindly arranged for prints of the portraits to be made for the sitters, and after a failed attempt to present them at our AGM in March 2020, which was cancelled due to the first lockdown for Covid, Betty, Pauline and I were presented with our framed prints. Whilst there we were treated to a lunch and had the chance to look over some of the archive material not normally on display to the public including HM the Queen's application to join the Association and papers and photos from when she underwent her training in the ATS. The prints are a wonderful memory of an amazing day as each sitter had been interviewed in front of an audience whilst the portraits were painted - whoever could have guessed what escapades the five had got up to during their service?"

Rowena Naile



"We're all Army Girls aren't we? But what makes the characters in Dr Tessa Dunlop's new book special is that we know almost all of them; and attending her evening book launch at the NAM gave the audience a chance to get to know them even better. The book captures stories of women who served during World War II, many of whom joined voluntarily before women's conscription began in 1941.

"Betty Webb has always been keen to promote the WRAC Association and from her own writing we know something of the part she played in the code breaking

at Bletchley Park. But what of Diana Lidstone, a chef during WWII who served on into the WRAC until 1951? Hearing Diana, Betty and the other panel members bring their memories alive in a chat-show style presentation filmed for Channel 5 was an absolute delight. There's no doubt those of us who enjoyed careers in the Army since have a lot to thank these ladies for, not least the fact that issued underwear is now a thing of the past! It had been a long time since the hundred or so strong audience had reveled in banter and laughed so hard our bellies ached. These Army Girls may have served over 80 years ago but hearing them on stage that evening proved the Army never leaves you."

Julia Doig



WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

As serving women across the UK and the globe took part in 2021's Remembrance services, we hear from three of our members who were in attendance at very different events

At the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month 2021, a small contingent of Association members had made their way to London to pay their respects to those who have served before us. Pauline Milne shares her thoughts from the day.

For many years, along with other members of the WRAC Association, I have been fortunate to attend the opening of the **"Field of Remembrance"** - the memorial garden in the grounds of Westminster Abbey divided into approximately 250 plots for regimental and armed services associations. This event is always held on the Thursday before Remembrance Sunday but in 2020, because of Covid-19, the tickets allocated to the Association were extremely limited and unfortunately, I and others were unable to attend. This year was a welcome comeback, and although the Association was not allocated the full quota of tickets as in previous years, in 2020, eleven Association members including Fiona Gardner our Vice President were in attendance.

Some of us arrived early which gave us a chance to view some of the plots and take photos. The plot I particularly like to visit is the one for the Commonwealth. This is a reminder of the important roles many of those countries have played in supporting Britain, particularly through two world wars.

We are never too sure which member of the Royal Family is going to officiate until they arrive, but there were whispers that this time it would be the Duchess of Cornwall. Indeed it was, and looking resplendent in bottle green. With most of us in our Association greens she could have blended into our number perfectly!

Once the Royal party arrived, the officiating Clergyman said prayers, which were followed by the Last Post from a lone bugler, the exhortation, then the two-minute silence with the bugler signalling the end of it. With the event being held on Armistice Day this year, it felt all the more poignant; I hope to be able to attend once more this year.



In Guildford, where the WRAC enjoys the Freedom of the Borough, Audrey Smith attended the annual Remembrance Sunday service, march and wreath laying.

The Training Centre was in Guildford before the formation of the WRAC in 1949 and since the end of the Second World War representatives have laid a wreath at the War Memorial in the castle grounds. Last year there was no civic service and only one lone representative of the Association was allowed to attend. There were no crowds allowed, and an eerie silence when the Chaplain was not speaking. This year was very different and the crowds even bigger than I remembered – a joy to experience, but it did make it rather difficult to find anyone at the end of the service!

The Civic Service at Holy Trinity Church was attended by representatives of all the services and contingents, the Mayor, the council, all wearing their robes, and the Regimental Colonel of the Princess of Wales Royal Regiment. After the service our small contingent formed up immediately behind the County Regiment (originally the Royal West Surrey Regiment, then the Queens Regiment) as they were the only other army organisation that had been given the Freedom of the Borough. The salute was taken by the Mayor as we marched down the High Street to the Castle Grounds. The atmosphere was so different from the previous year as there were people everywhere. After a short service and the two minutes silence

an Association wreath was laid by Rowena Patrick on the World War Memorial commemorating both First and Second World Wars. An Association wreath was also laid on the memorial for those who have died since these two conflicts. As is usual it was a moment for reflection before Reveille. The silence was only broken by the bugler.

Afterwards we returned to the Guildhall, with the opportunity to chat to the Mayor, Councillor Marsha Mosely. She was fascinated to see Christine Haddock wearing her Imperial Service Medal and then discovered that she was also her local Borough Councillor. Suzette Bond had travelled all the way from Whitstable in Kent, as she wanted to march in Guildford again having been in the parade in 1988 when the WRAC exercised their Freedom. She spotted Colonel Nan Robertson in the church and was delighted to meet up again in the Guildhall as she had been her batwoman when she was Commandant. Caroline Cassidy lives locally and was in the TA for 12 years. I met her when she was selling poppies outside Tesco in Aldershot and she agreed to come along, but almost didn't recognise me as we were wearing masks! Everyone who was there is determined to come again next year to march in the borough which has been the home of the ATS and then the WRAC for nearly 50 years.

Major (Retd) Rowena Patrick MBE laying the wreath on behalf of the WRAC Association. Alongside Captain (Retd) Graham Bigwood on behalf of the Queens Regiment



This year sees the 30th anniversary of the closure of the WRAC Centre. There have always been strong ties between the Borough and the WRAC which was recognised by Guildford conferring the Freedom of the Borough on the Corps.

The Borough has agreed that the WRAC Association will play a special part in proceedings this year and we want to ensure that we are well represented on Sunday 13th November. It is likely that the day will take the same format as last year, with a Civic Service followed by a march to the castle grounds which is no further than 400 yards. There will then be a short service followed by the laying of wreaths.

After leaving the castle grounds there is a reception in the Guildhall, and local arrangements may include lunch in a local restaurant. We would like to have as many people as possible join us for this important Remembrance event. Please contact office.manager@wraca.org.uk or call 0300 400 1992 to register your interest.

Early on the morning of the 14th November, thousands of veterans made their way to London to parade at the Cenotaph. Among them, the proud members of the WRAC Association who were led by Mary Woollard MBE. Mary reflects on the day for the Lioness.

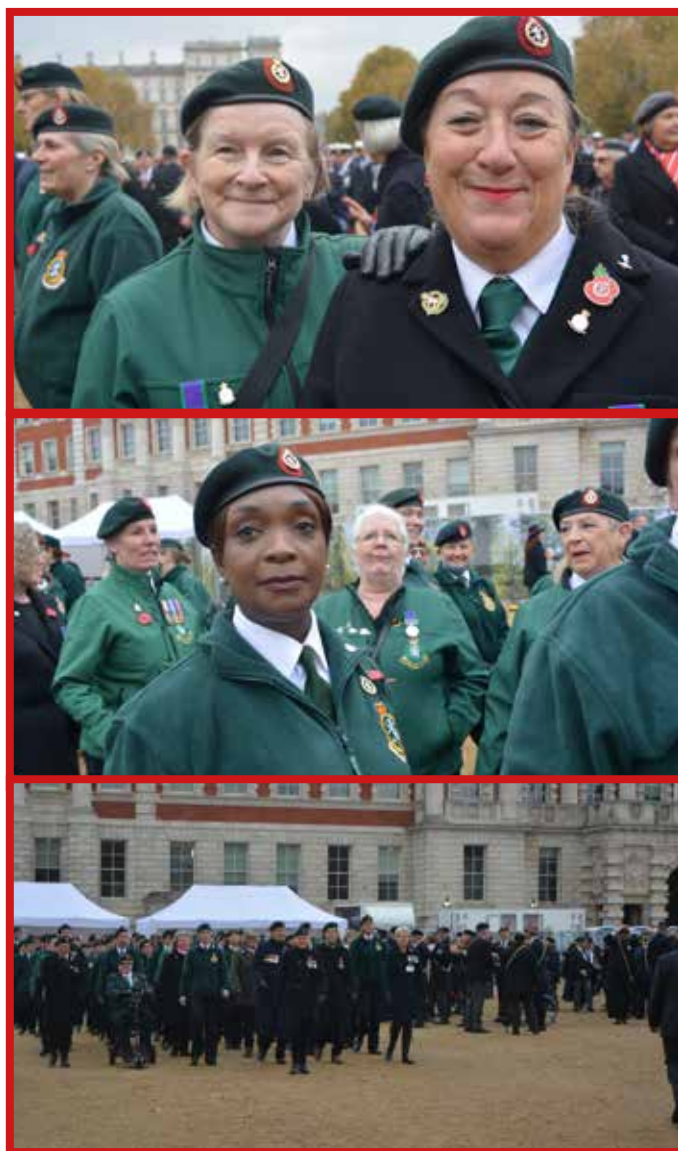
Entry to Horse Guards proved a little problematic, with Admiralty Arch the only entrance, and just the one body scanner. By 9:45 the queue to gain entry had backed up onto Trafalgar Square causing traffic chaos. With medals setting the off scanner, common sense prevailed, and it was deactivated - just in time to form up by 10:30, veterans made it onto Horse Guards Parade. Over 60 members of the Association from all over the country, just over a third attending for the first time, marched through the arch onto Whitehall and turned left towards Trafalgar Square, we were met by large cheering crowds and formed up the 3rd of 4 columns.

At 11:00 Big Ben sounded and Whitehall fell silent. This year our position meant we could see the big screen and were able to watch members of the Royal family lay their wreaths, followed by politicians and representatives of the Commonwealth States. The Service of Remembrance followed. The march past began. As each column moved off, they were applauded and cheered on their way. Then it was our turn as I

led our number marching smartly down the length of Whitehall, past the Memorial to the Women who served in WW2 and giving a crisp eyes left to the Cenotaph. The Association wreath was laid by Life Vice-President Alison Brown OBE, and Karen Francis laid the wreath on behalf of the Women's Land Army & Women's Timber Corps. This year was particularly poignant as, for the first time, there were no members of the ATS on parade. They were sorely missed.

Along the entire route we were cheered and applauded. As we turned from Birdcage Walk into Horse Guards the cheers were especially loud, with members of the Association who were unable to march congregating to show their support. A number of compliments were given by parade marshals as to how smart we were, even HRH Prince William, who took the salute as we returned to Horse Guards, was heard to say "Very smart ladies". We returned to Horse Guards; the parade finished with the National Anthem to mark the departure of HRH Prince William. After much catching up and lots of photographs, we all dispersed, some to social events, others to make the journey home. Everyone who paraded did so with a great sense of respect and pride. To march past amongst thousands of veterans is an amazing honour. I hope to see old and new faces there next year.

Photography: Heather Gaughran



Register now for a place in next year's Cenotaph parade. Whether you have attended in previous years, or have never had the opportunity before, the experience is one you won't forget. There is no dress policy other than 'smartly turned out' and we would like to be represented by as many WRAC Association members as possible.

You can also register your interest to parade at Guildford where the Corps holds the Freedom of the Borough. The closing date for registering is July 29th. Get in touch with office.manager@wraca.org.uk or call 0300 400 1992 to find out more and join us next November to honour those who have served before, alongside and after us.

HONOURED WHERE THEY FELL

Shattered into three pieces in the autumn weather, the plaque to the Norfolk bombing which claimed the lives of 26 ATS women is set to be replaced. Marking our single biggest loss of life, this plaque has been attended year on year, as we have paid tribute to those who gave their lives in 1943.

Area coordinator Lyn Hatch, and Joan Awbery, now 101 years old and the driving force behind the original plaque share the story and ask you to save a date.

The story of the 26 ATS women killed by enemy air action in 1943 did not unfold for almost 50 years. As was the custom during the second world war, no public information was released about the raid and its outcome – not even to the parents, who knew only that they had suffered the loss of a precious daughter while in the service of her country.

For 50 years, families and the general public knew little or nothing of the exact circumstances, and no doubt it would have remained so, were it not for the diligence and persistence of Mr Valentine Grimble, a researcher into war-time history, who lived locally. He discovered that, in 1943, a number of ATS women had been killed as a result of a direct strike by an enemy plane at the site of what was Sefton House on North Parade in Great Yarmouth.

Mr Grimble passed all his research information and records he had gathered onto Joan Awbery then secretary of the Norfolk Branch. Joan with the help of Meg Watson, set about finding relatives of those women. Eventually all relatives were traced and contacted to tell them a plaque in their relatives' memory would be erected.

In 1994 the plaque was installed and unveiled by Lady Mary Soames, daughter of Winston Churchill and member of the Association who had served in the ATS during the war. Sadly, the parents of these women had all passed away, most of them without knowing the fate of their daughters, but many brothers, sisters and relatives from all over the country attended the unveiling.



Plaque unveiled 'Lady Mary Soames in 1994'

It is our intention to commission a new plaque, and to hold an event to dedicate it and remember those women who gave their lives that day. We are looking to arrange this for Sunday the 15th May, so make a note in your diary and look out for full details which will go out to branches and members via email and social media once arrangements are in place.

We are also keen to know whether these women are remembered on the war memorials in the towns and villages they called home. If you happen to be passing any of the places listed on the original plaque (pictured) and spot their names, please do take a photo and send it to editor@wraca.org.uk.



The WRAC Association and people of Norfolk remember



Extract from an account of research of Mr Valentine Grimble

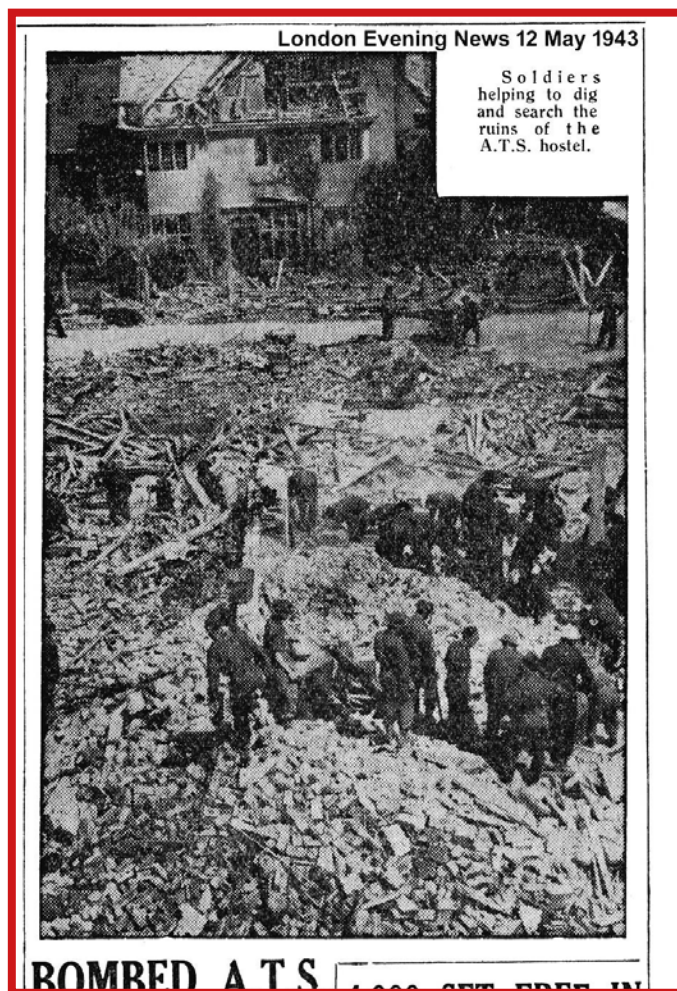
On the morning of Tuesday May 11th 1943, a fine sunny day, the towns people of Great Yarmouth were up and going about their business. On the sea-front a happy band of ATS girls were marching towards their hostel, a pre-war hotel, and believed to be returning from a PT session on a nearby recreation ground. They dismissed outside and entered their billet. All was quiet. On the Gorleston Cliffs a Royal Observer post was situated, its members on duty, maintaining a constant vigil, as ever. Just prior to 0845hrs, in a north-easterly direction from the post, the sound of low-flying aircraft could be heard, but a low sun and sea haze obscured visibility. Then, within seconds, a force of enemy aircraft heading towards the coast was identified. The fighter bombers flew in very low, below effective coastal radar detection. Only in the final few seconds was the enemy strike forces approach realised by sound and visual means by the Royal Observer Corps post. In seconds the Focke-Wulfs of Luftwaffe Unit SKG/10, operating from an advance airfield in Holland (believed to be Schipol) swept in from the east in loose staggered line abreast formation. Three bombs, released just over the shoreline impacted into three large buildings along the North Drive sea-front. In seconds the ATS hostel was reduced to rubble, only a stump of a few feet high was left standing.

When the initial shock of the raid had passed, Army personnel nearby and others rushed to the scene of destruction. Aided by the local Rescue Squads, ARP units and the police, they burrowed into the debris in an effort to find any survivors. It soon became clear that casualties were going to be high, considering the number of girls known to be in the building. The number of fatalities rose as bodies came to light. Sadly, those killed were found in various parts of the building; upper floors and walls had toppled down and brought their inmates with them. It appeared from the appalling destruction that death had come about almost instantly. Tragically, all but one of the girls died in the old pre-war hotel that served as a hostel, Private Doreen Chapple of Cinderford in Gloucester, aged 22 was dug out alive and in fair condition.

The 26 ATS girls of a signals unit attached to 103 AA Brigade lost their lives in their hostel, six are interned in the Gt Yarmouth (Caister) cemetery, two in the Roman Catholic cemetery close by, and the others were at the request of their families taken home for burial.

The 23 year old, Officer in charge of the girls hostel, also showed her true mettle. Subaltern Ann Green worked with the rescuers and was later commended by the AA Command Sir Fredrick Pile for her 'fine example of calmness and devotion to duty'. The citation reads 'she worked incessantly and calmly organised and encouraged those around her, and rendered invaluable aid in clearing the rubble and sets a magnificent example to all ranks'

Five other ATS girls working as Signals Operators were also highly commended. The citation praised them for 'maintaining communications throughout the whole day and night and dealing with the heavy signals traffic.'



SAVE THE DATE

Mark Sunday the 15th of May into your diary for the event in Great Yarmouth and keep Saturday 30th July free too. We will be back at the National Memorial Arboretum for a summer event, so picnic rugs at the ready ladies!

EVENTS (FORTHCOMING)

GRAND REUNION 18 - 20 March 2022 LEEDS

**As we prepare to descend on Leeds in March we
look back on**

A March in Leeds - 1943

On the 25th June 1943 a spectacular parade marched down The Headrow in Leeds. A military band played in front of the town hall and an RAF Hurricane was on display for the excited crowd of thousands. The march was organised as part of the Wings for Victory campaign to raise money to buy aircraft. Taking the salute is General Sir William Bartholomew, but look more closely at who is on parade. Scores of women who proudly took a uniform as part of their service to the country in



the Second World War. Among them, the women of the ATS. This incredible photo from our archives contains little information, but further research uncovered a few extra details. The march was held as part of Women's Day, and that year Leeds had its very first female Lord Mayor, Jessie Beatrice Kitson. If anyone knows any more about our connection with this prestigious event, we'd love to hear from you, just email editor@wraca.org.uk.



As we prepare to travel to Leeds for our Grand Reunion, it was wonderful to come across this picture taken just a few hundred yards from where we will be Beating Retreat. Sadly we are unable to march ourselves this year, but as we come together, we will remember these women, and all those who have marched proudly in the uniforms of the WAAC, QMAAC, ATS and WRAC throughout the years.

WRAC LIONESSES' 10k Sunday 22nd May 2022

Next year we are in MANCHESTER for our 10th Anniversary on Sunday 22nd May 2022. Plans are coming together for this, our 10th Anniversary Run; hopefully we will have 100 entries.

Do come and join us, runners, walkers and supporters (and Mo Bear) all welcome, details in this Lioness and in the WRAC LIONESSES FUNDRAISING GROUP on Facebook or contact me on Facebook, Messenger or email wendyhootonski@aol.com.

Many thanks to you all for your continued support, I really appreciate your commitment and efforts in these trying times. Stay safe, best wishes.
Wendy Hooton

EAST ANGLIAN BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL Bury St Edmunds, 14th - 19th June 2022

I'm looking forward to later this year and hopefully more people will join our team. Free beer and cider - what's not to like? There are two Premier Inns in town which are both walking distance to the cathedral. If you don't want to work come as a visitor (ask Janet Edwards) and boost the profits! Dates for what will be the 30th East Anglian Beer & Cider Festival, are 14th - 19th June 2022.

Wendy Hooton

WRAC ASSOCIATION SUMMER EVENT Saturday 30th July 2022 National Memorial Arboretum

Exact details are still being finalised but will hopefully include the re-dedication of a tree in the AGC's Antecedents Avenue, and recognition of it being 30 years since the integration of women into the wider British Army (and therefore disbandment of the WRAC). Bring a picnic and enjoy time sharing memories, meeting friends, sharing comradeship and 'Esprit de Corps'.

CYCLEFEST 2022 17 - 23 August 2022

The weekend is great fun and many ladies have already booked for 2022. If you would like to attend please contact Liz@trispirevents.com.

We are also keen to encourage ladies to come out to Mallorca with us and spend some time in what is regarded as one of the best places in the world to cycle, and used by many of the pro cycle teams for winter training. Again, please contact Liz for more details.
Liz King

2022 BIRMINGHAM INTERNATIONAL TATTOO 10th & 11th September 2022, Resorts World Arena, NEC

Our own national Standard Bearer has been invited to take part in the above event (re-scheduled from 2021), along with all RBL, ex-Service Associations and Cadets.

This event is:
"... Britain's biggest indoor tattoo (a type of military type tournament) featuring marching bands, pipes & drums, field gun racing, dog racing and much more including a spectacular Grand Finale with over 1,000 performers".

For more information and/or to buy tickets go to their website: <http://bhamtattoo.com/>



WRAC LIONESSES ARE CELEBRATING!

IT'S OUR 10th ANNIVERSARY

WRAC LIONESSES 10k RUN

MANCHESTER - Sunday 22nd May

**Please come and join us for this special event
Runners, walkers, supporters all welcome
Bring your husbands partners and friends
All donations for the WRAC Association**

**Details can be found:
in the WRAC LIONESSES FUNDRAISING GROUP on Facebook
or CONTACT: Wendy Hooton on Facebook/Messenger
Email: wendyhootonski@aol.com Mob: 07775-505326**



Grand Reunion 2022

(incorporating QMAAC and
ATS Comrades Association)



Friday 18 March - Sunday 20 March 2022
The Queen's Hotel, Leeds, LS1 1PJ

LEEDS 2022

There are still spaces available for the Grand Reunion Weekend package (Friday to Sunday inclusive), so if you haven't booked yet and would like to come along, send in your Booking Form and hopefully we will see you in March.

Transport

You are responsible for making your own way to and from Leeds.

Accommodation

You are responsible for your own accommodation reservation(s). All the special-rate rooms at The Queens Hotel (GR HQ hotel) are fully booked but Leeds has a wide selection of accommodation nearby. For further details contact Visit Leeds (www.visitleeds.co.uk).

Provisional Programme

Using the Queen's Hotel, Leeds, as our event centre the weekend's programme is as follows:

Thursday 17th March

- 15.00 – 17.00 Association Welcome Desk opens (for early birds)

Friday 18 March

- 10.00 – 12.00 & 14.00 – 16.00 Association Welcome / Registration Desk open
- 19.30 Buffet Dinner with fancy dress and disco
- 01.00 Disco ends and bar closes

Dress Code: Women of the 20th Century (optional and NOT mandatory)

Saturday 19 March

- Morning – for you to relax, enjoy 'retail' (or other) therapy, or visit historic Leeds
- 10.00 – 12.00 Association Welcome Desk open
- 11.00 Branch Secretaries meeting
- 14.00 AGM (see separate page for Agenda)
- 17.00 approx. Beating Retreat by The Yorkshire Military Band (City Square, Leeds) prior to Gala Dinner
- 18.30 Pre Dinner Drinks (we also to hope to have a photographer on hand)
- 19.30 Gala Dinner with Guest Speaker Brig Elizabeth Faithful-Davies

Dress Code: Evening / Cocktail wear

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

Sunday 20 March (morning)

- 10.30 Drumhead Service (in the Queen's Hotel)
- After which you are free to leave for home, or whatever plans you have made.
- Parade – **PLEASE NOTE: Due to there being NO suitable location in Leeds City Centre we have made the difficult decision that there will be NO Parade this year, for which we are very sorry.**

Grand Draw

Tickets for the Grand Draw are £1 each. Additional tickets will be available at the Queen's Hotel when the Welcome Desk is open. (You should have received a book of 5 tickets with the previous copy of Lioness).

- Don't forget to include payment for any tickets purchased with your Grand Reunion payment.
- You don't need to be attending the Grand Reunion to take part in the Draw, anyone can participate in the Grand Draw and if you are successful we will post your prize to you.
- If you would like to purchase more tickets you can do so via HQ WRAC Association by post, phone (0300 400 1992) or online at www.wraccassociation.org.uk/shop

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

Applications

with the appropriate fee, need to be into HQ office asap. If the Weekend is FULLY BOOKED a waiting list will be put in place.

Cancellation Policy

If you cancel -

- up to, and including, 31 January 2022 – Full refund of sums paid to HQ WRAC Association
- between 01 February 2022 and 28 February 2022 - 50% refund per person
- on or after 01 March 2022 - No refund for cancellations.

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

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



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2022

SATURDAY 19th MARCH



Draft AGM AGENDA:

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks
2. Apologies for Absence
3. Confirmation of 2021 Minutes
4. Business Arising
5. Trustees Report by Vice President
6. Membership Council Report
7. Annual Report and Accounts
8. Resolutions
 - a. Trustee/Council
 - b. Branch
9. Guest Speaker Lt Gen (Retd) Sir Nicholas Pope KCB CBE (new Chair of Cobseo)
10. Any Other Business
11. Date of Next Meeting

The full and final Agenda, with associated papers, will be issued in advance, as usual.

If you have any observations to make, or you wish to comment, on any Agenda item please send written notification and details of your comment / observation into the Association Secretary by Friday 4th March 2022, at the latest.

Send to:

Association Secretary, Unit 11, Basepoint, Winnall Valley Road, Winchester, Hampshire, SO23 0LD,
or by email to: penny.muxworthy@wraca.org.uk

Features

On the 80th anniversary of the conscription of women, we wondered: Would you have chosen the Army in 1941?

The conscription of young men kicked in from the day Britain went to war in 1939. It soon became clear that women were needed for the war effort too and so, on December 8th 1941, the Government passed the National Service Act (No 2) which made provision for the conscription of women. If you were single and aged between 20 and 30 it wasn't long before your papers arrived, and girls were asked to choose the Land Army, factory work or the Armed Forces.

Marge, Helen and Dora chose the Army, and now, as members of the WRAC Association, they were happy to share their stories with the Lioness to mark this momentous anniversary.

Dora Cudlipp would never have realised just how close she was to the 'Home of the ATS' at Guildford when she was growing up on a farm in Surrey. It was a short journey to Queen's Camp in Guildford for Dora when her papers arrived in 1942. Dora was working in her local butcher's shop as the cashier, and later became the delivery driver when the young men went off to war. After only four lessons from the man who ran the paper shop, he told Dora she was ready to go driving by herself!

After her basic training, Dora was sent to London to become a clerk, and with her experience of handling money Dora spent most of her wartime years working in accounts. Having moved from London, to Dorset and Cheltenham,

Dora was finally stationed in Oxford. She was responsible for checking bills from civilian vehicles and tradespeople hired by the Army, and generally maintaining records and accounts as part of a team. Nothing untoward could get past Dora and she progressed up the ranks to Sergeant. She thought herself lucky because everyone had heard that if Hitler won the war he was going to make Oxford his capital city and as such it was never bombed. During their training in London the girls had to spend many an hour working with their gas masks on, which made for tough work.

Dora remembers the friends she made in the ATS with great fondness. When Dora was demobbed and returned to the farm, she missed the ATS: "The ATS improved me. I think I felt I could cope with things"



Helen Tocher (now Jewitt) was also working as a butcher in her local shop near Glasgow and knew that having a 'man's job' meant she was exempt from serving. Keen to enlist, when Helen received her call-up papers in 1942, she told the Labour Office she was merely an assistant which meant that she was accepted into the ATS.

It was no surprise with her early years spent in domestic service and butchering experience that Helen found herself being trained as a Cook. Although disappointed at first, because she had wanted to learn to drive, she found the work easy with 20 cooks working

together at any one time she enjoyed being in the kitchens – even the clogs they wore on their feet! After a day of cooking, they would attend lectures in the evenings in the still-hot cookhouse, where it was difficult to stay awake. Helen excelled, learning to cook for large numbers, using special stoves under canvas cover, and as shift leader she earned herself promotion to Lance Corporal. With her training complete, as a cook her trade took her all over the country.



Much of Helen's service was spent supporting the men training within the Royal Artillery anti-aircraft units, travelling from Ty Croes in Wales, via Walton on the Naze and up to Whitby Abbey. Whilst based at Hilly Fields in Brockley, Helen watched one day as a Nazi fighter pilot was hedge-hopping so low that she could clearly see his face. Here there were Ack Ack guns and barrage balloons, and Helen recalls taking cocoa to the officers during night raids.

When she was based at Frinton On Sea, Helen would hear the doodlebugs overhead, wait to hear the engine cut out before running for shelter. One day a messenger arrived carrying plans and an officer called Helen into his office and showed her a diagram of a doodlebug. This was the first time the British had received any intelligence on the bomb.



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Marge Payne (now Barton) was working at ICI metals in Birmingham when war broke out, which was functioning as a munitions factory. At the time it wasn't uncommon for girls to fill traditional male roles, primarily to try and protect the jobs for family members; and so Marge moved on to keep her brother's insurance round going for him until the war was over. That was soon to change.

Marge was excited to have been conscripted and had high hopes of becoming a teleprinter. Her basic training took place in Droitwich, staying at The Norbury House Hotel, but such comforts were short lived as the next stage of her training was spent in Nissen huts with toilet and wash facilities in a wintery West Yorkshire field; Marge remembers some of the girls crying with cold.

On joining up her first task was to collect her uniform - a lot of khaki - and bloomers too, which elicited groans and giggles from the queuing girls. Hair was kept two inches off the collar, and she was issued with a cleaning kit for shoes and buttons, which all had to be polished daily, ready for regular kit inspections. Marge wore her uniform with pride and soon learned that to keep the creases in the skirt, and to save ironing, she could put them under the mattress every night and sleep on it.

Marge recalls "Along with our uniform we were given a number, mine was W/212410, and a very important little

book called an AB64, which we had to keep in the left-hand breast pocket of our uniform and always carry with us. This was our pay book and it contained our identity details. Every week, we stood in a line then marched to the table, saluted the officer, passed the book over and stated our Army number before receiving our few shillings pay."



Marge had 14 postings in total. At Luton Hoo she experienced the V1 and V2 bombers flying overhead, and there, on the 6th of June 1944, she received the teleprinter message reporting that at 8.30 that morning, British troops had landed on the beaches in Normandy. Not realising it at the time, she was probably the first person in England to know that this mission had been carried out.

Opting to stay in the ATS after her conscription ended, Marge found herself in Germany as a Corporal supporting the clean-up effort after peace was declared.



All three of these ATS veterans are now proud members of the WRAC Association and took part in newspaper, TV and radio coverage to help us to celebrate the 80th anniversary of the conscription of women. Thanks to them, their families and their buddies for helping us to mark the occasion so well.

MEMORIALS

NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM

As mentioned in 'Events' we have a tree in the AGC's Antecedent Avenue, which is in need of replacing/re-planting, and the NMA have also identified a small number of tree and name plaques that relate to ex-ATS / ex-WRAC ladies. Some of these need relocating to the Association Plot, from their original siting (which is now the National Miners Memorial).

We will, of course, keep you updated on progress and any potential associated dedication events.

GUILDFORD CATHEDRAL

We are still in discussions with the Cathedral Dean and Chapter over the possibility of a plaque to commemorate the Association's centenary and close links with the Cathedral. It is hoped an appropriate plaque will go above the Books of Remembrance cabinet in due course.

ROYAL HOSPITAL CHELSEA

We are in discussions with the Hospital authorities, through the unstinting efforts of Wendy Hooton, for a statuette to commemorate women joining the Hospital. The first female In-pensioners were ex-ATS ladies, followed by ex-WRAC. There are currently 14 in-pensioner ladies who served in the ATS and/or WRAC.

ATS MEMORIAL, GREAT YARMOUTH

It is our intention to commission a new plaque, and to hold an event to dedicate it and remember those women who gave their lives that day.

We are looking to arrange this for **Sunday 15th May**, so make a note in your diary and look out for full details which will go out to branches and members via email and social media once arrangements are in place.

CONGRATULATIONS

FRANCES PRATT

100 on 11th September 2021

The Greater London branch helped Frances celebrate her 100th birthday when five of them went to visit her the week before her birthday in September. They took high tea to her house for a small party and spent four wonderful hours hearing all about her war time experience. Frances was a branch member for over 15 years having served in the Land Army. The branch also gave her a photo of the Land Army statue in a frame for her writing desk, which she had not seen, and a small Land Army badge. She was overwhelmed by it all and a great time was had by all.

Congratulations Frances and thank you for your service.



LORNA LANSDOWN

100 on 5th November 2021

Lorna was also one of those conscripted following the 1941 Act of Parliament.



Lorna on 3rd September 1939



Lorna meeting Joan Awbery

LADY MARTHA BRUCE

100 on 7th November 2021

In 1963 I applied for a place on the new WRAC (TA) Officer Cadet Cadre, which was being launched by Lt Col Lady Martha Bruce. She accepted me, something for which I have been grateful for so many years. Never a day passed without my learning something from her. This extraordinary lady, who celebrated her 100th birthday on 7th November (2021) was a trailblazer in so many ways.

During the Second World War she was awarded an Emergency Commission in 1943. She served in France and Italy, going on in peacetime to the ATS TA in 1947, being promoted to Senior Commander in 1949. She transferred to the WRAC TA as a Captain, to Major in 1955, serving on the strength of 317 Bn WRAC/TA, then to Lt Col in 1961.

1961 saw the disbandment of 317 Bn, redesignated as HQ WRAC 51 Highland Division. It was at this point that Lady Martha succeeded in the formidable task of finding a new slot in the new set-up for each and every woman under her command. She was appointed CWRAC (51) Div/Dist. During her command she organised two stays in France and one in Denmark. In August 1967 she relinquished her Commission on the disbandment of HQ WRAC (51) H. She was then appointed Brevet Colonel.

Not content with resting on her (considerable!) laurels, in 1975 Lady Martha became the first Governor of Cornton Vale's Women's Prison. She was a driving force in 're-thinking the rehabilitation of female prisoners', being quoted in a newspaper as saying, "You can't lock women up in cages and expect a miracle".

Today Lady Martha remains active in the village of Limekilns, somehow still finding time to deal with her many interests, still capable of asking a probing question. May God go with you, Ma'am.

Isobel Gordon
Chairman, Fife & Tayside Branch

BUDDY BUDDY SCHEME

The Buddy Buddy Scheme is still in operation, linking women who have served and/or are still serving together for friendship, memories and laughter. Just before Remembrancetide the following example was shared with the media:

Rose Kilpatrick, Member of the Swindon Branch and a participant in the Buddy-Buddy Scheme



"The WRAC Association is like my family - I talk to lots of people, I'm part of the Swindon branch - I absolutely love meeting up with them and talking - we need each other - we need to stick together."

Rose Kilpatrick's life has been filled with adventure and many challenges. From joining the Army at just seventeen, her skills as a driver led her to work for the Royal Corps of Transport 68 Squadron RCT Rheindahlen Germany whilst most women her age, at the time, were posted within the UK. Despite tumultuous periods in Rose's personal life, she has always found that the Army has helped to provide her with a sense of belonging and long-lasting connectivity.

EARLY LIFE AND APPLICATION TO THE ARMY:

Rose grew up on a farm in Herefordshire and being one of nine children, she was born into a lively family. With lots of siblings around, Rose admittedly was fairly limited in how to look after herself, with her mother washing her hair for her the day she left to join the Army.

After working in a rubber glove factory for three years, one day, Rose went to work where she found an advertisement in a women's magazine: it was to join the WRAC and 'see the world'. From there, she went to London Road Gloucester Army Recruitment Centre, with the hope of some new and different opportunities. (Because she was under the age of 18, she needed her parents' consent to join the Army, and thankfully her father signed her papers.)

Start of Army Life:

Aged seventeen and a half, Rose left home and went to join the Armed Forces in Guildford (10/03/1970) where she acquired numerous skills and learnt how to march. Following this, Rose spent eight weeks in Aldershot to continue further training, learning to drive, and passing her test the first time.

Rose's childhood spent living on a farm meant that she knew how to drive vehicles very well, which led her to be posted to the Royal Corps of Transport 68 Squadron RCT Rheindahlen Germany in August 1970.



After six weeks of training (learning how to drive on the other side of the road), Rose drove people all over Germany. One man she used to drive around a lot was called Brigadier Mullins, who would visit different schools and locations

around Germany. In Rose's words, "I learnt a lot driving around Germany and it made me constantly intrigued about the state of Hitler's mind at the time".

Personal Life:

Rose went home on leave and took her boyfriend to meet her parents. Whilst there, she got married by a special license. On returning to Germany, she and her husband were kept apart from each other for long periods of time, and ultimately divorced after six years.

Rose has experienced several complicated relationships and situations in her family life but has continually found that the Army has helped to provide her with a sense of purpose and belonging. Particularly, as Rose joined the Army at a very young age, she has enjoyed the huge sense of camaraderie that she has shared with the other women that she served with and keeps in touch with them regularly.

Life after the army:

In 1978, Rose's career changed to driving around transit vans with the Security Corps. This involved driving around - often with very valuable possessions - and passing money through a hatch in the back of the vehicles in Colchester to deliver such packages.

Rose also worked as a cleaner in a ward of a Mental Health Hospital for 2 years and worked on the shop floor at Tesco Supermarket, Uxbridge, which she enjoyed very much.

After moving to Swindon, Rose worked putting the layers down on microchips at Plesseys. Rose joined RP Scherer in May 1990, and worked her way up to the level of chargehand, where she managed 40 employees on shift. She completed 22½ years there until she retired in 2012.



What the WRAC Assoc means to Rose: Rose loves talking to other WRAC Association women, visiting and meeting up with them. As recently as March this year [2021] she started as part of the group relaunching the Swindon branch and plays a key role in its organisation. Recently she has designed Covid

facemasks and named polo shirts with WRAC Association logos on them for all the women to wear in the meetings!

Rose also played a key role in organising the first indoor meeting on Thursday 8th July with about 10 members- "It was a fabulous meeting. We have made a firm decision to hold the meetings every third Thursday of every month. We also discussed meeting up at random times during the day at garden centres, or going for walks at the local parks. Plus, we held a raffle and raised a bit of money to go towards a Christmas party or a trip to the beach somewhere. I have had notification that other ladies want to come to the meetings. So it's all good news."

Rose & Rowena - and the WRAC Ass'n Buddy-Buddy Scheme

Rose also participates in the Buddy-Buddy Scheme which was started during the first Covid-19 lockdown to help ease social isolation, and provide purpose to those wanting to help each other through the crisis - in the spirit of support and camaraderie so typical of the charity, its members and supporters.

Rose was paired up with Rowena Naile, another Member of the charity, and also a Trustee: since June 2020, the pair have taken it in turn to call each other every Friday. In Rose's words, "The calls we have are great, and, having spoken to others who participate in the Buddy Buddy Scheme, I think it's amazing. When the lockdown eased, neither Rowena nor I wanted our calls to end, so we carried on, after all, there's no reason why the scheme should end!" The Buddy Buddy Scheme is yet another benefit to ladies who join the Association.

**You can still get involved with the Buddy Buddy Scheme – call, or email, HQ Office for more information.
(See Buddy Buddy advert elsewhere in this edition)**



ATS & WRAC Association Benevolent Fund

Making A Difference

BENEVOLENT FUND GRANTS

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 financial assistance they would be unable to do so. Grants can be awarded by the Benevolent Fund Secretary up to £100 per event but must not exceed £200 per year per member.

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.

ONE-OFF AND RECURRING GRANTS

The ATS & WRAC Association Benevolent Fund awards one-off financial grants to purchase specific goods, services or facilities for eligible former servicewomen, or their dependents, in need. The charity also provides regular payments (Recurring 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 and the costs of care at home

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR HELP?

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

ARE THERE ANY OTHER CRITERIA?

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

ONE OFF GRANTS

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

REGULAR CHARITABLE PAYMENTS:

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

SO HOW DO YOU APPLY FOR HELP?

If you are a former ATS or WRAC regular or TA servicewoman who needs assistance, or if you know someone who does, then your first port of call is your local branch of SSAFA or regional Royal British Legion (RBL) office. SSAFA or the RBL will arrange for a trained caseworker to interview you in your home to establish the full range of assistance that you need. The caseworker will complete a report that includes details of your household income. This is called means-testing and ensures that your Benevolent Fund's charitable money goes to those in real need. When the report is complete it is sent to the Benevolent Fund Secretary. Once received, applications are considered at the appropriate grants committee meeting and a decision is taken.

SSAFA: 0800 731 4880 www.ssafa.org.uk/help-you/do-you-need-our-help-or-support

RBL: 0808 802 8080 www.britishlegion.org.uk/about-us/contact-us

ssafa | the
Armed Forces
charity



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

BENEVOLENT FUND NEWS

Julie Winks, Benevolent Fund Secretary

2021 has been a complicated year. We started to re-emerge after a number of lockdowns and it started to feel as though life was beginning to return to pre-covid times albeit a 'new normal'. This enabled caseworkers to resume work although for the most part assessment visits are still undertaken remotely. The Ben Fund has seen an increase of requests for assistance when out of lockdowns, however, requests are not back up to pre-pandemic levels. It is difficult to predict moving forward how many cases we will have and what sort of help will be requested. As always, the Ben Fund remains committed to support those in genuine need and will continue to work collaboratively with both SSAFA, RBL as well as other service charities including regimental associations.

Both SSAFA and The Royal British Legion (TRBL) have undertaken reviews of their Welfare Teams during 2021. Members requiring assistance should continue to contact them through helplines (details shown under Benevolent Fund Grants). SSAFA now have paid employees in their regional offices and face to face and virtual casework will continue to be carried out by volunteers with a successful recruiting campaign seeing over 250 new SSAFA volunteers this year.



As you will remember (as reported in the Lioness edition 2021 No 1) we had an amazing response to our request to members to complete an online survey. Combat Stress has analysed the data and written five research papers of which two have been published in the British Medical Journal Military. The other three papers are awaiting publication.

Combat Stress has proposed conducting two follow on studies to explore the trauma experiences of female veterans and LGBT+ veterans. This would be a qualitative one involving interviews with 2 groups of 10 volunteers from those of our members who completed the online survey and screened positive for PTSD. From the interviews Combat Stress will establish what type of trauma the interviewees had experienced ie combat trauma or interpersonal trauma (eg sexual harassment/assault etc) which in turn would show how best to treat the consequential PTSD. This research will be done with support from Kings College London. The proposal is being reviewed by Kings College University Ethics Committee.

This research will help the charity better support beneficiaries of the Benevolent Fund and members of the Association. The results will be shared with the Cobseo Veterans Female Cluster.

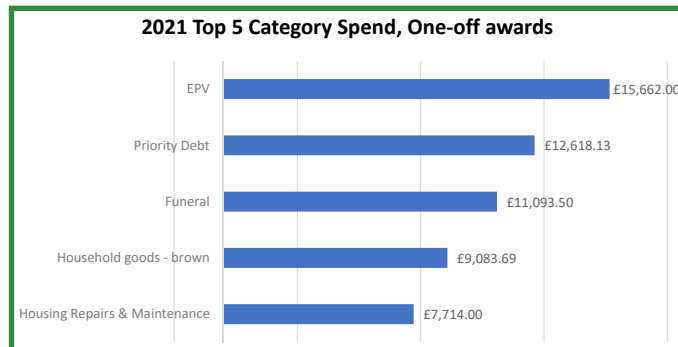
Reported below is an update of the Ben Fund during 2021. If you are interested in the full financial year this information will be within the Annual Return which will be available on our website shortly.

Key Facts 2021

- 130 applications for assistance were received during 2021 with 89 awards granted.
- 18 PRMF AMG Annuitants, 5 PRMF AMG Overseas Annuitants and 5 Ben Fund AMG Annuitants were supporting during the financial year 2020/2021.
- 6 beneficiaries were supported with Nursing Home Top Up Fees and 2 for Care at Home.

BENEVOLENT FUND EXPENDITURE

The top 5 one-off grant categories during 2021 are listed below.

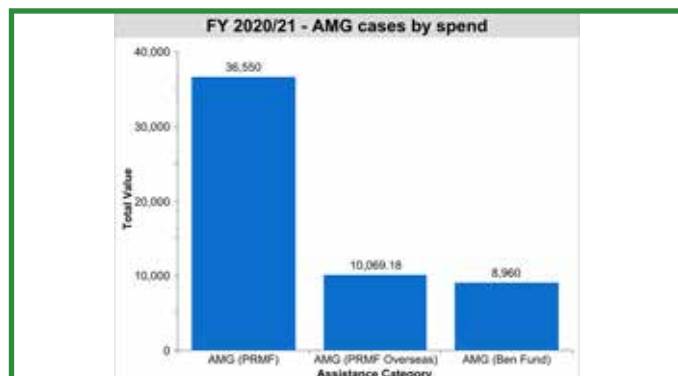


Awards are also made for the following categories:

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

Recurring Grants

During the last financial year the Annual Maintenance Grants (AMGs) were split into three categories and awarded as below:



Also available are the Care Enhancement Grants (CEG) which are split into Nursing home Fees Top Up, Care at Home and Personal Expense Allowance. 6 beneficiaries received assistance with Nursing Home Fee Top Ups during 2021 and 2 for Care at Home.

"We write to thank you very much for your grant of £990 which was a valued contribution towards our heating upgrade. Our former heating was by weighty wood and coal, and the weighty 25 kg bags had become too heavy for us to handle. Sincerely, we thank you again for your financial assistance".
£990 housing repairs and maintenance

Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance (VCHA)



The first duty of Government is the **DEFENCE** of the realm.

Our Armed Forces fulfil that responsibility on behalf of the Government, **SACRIFICING** some civilian freedoms, facing **DANGER** and, sometimes, suffering serious **INJURY** or **DEATH** as a result of their duty.

FAMILIES play a vital role in supporting the operational effectiveness of the Armed Forces.



In return, the whole nation has a **MORAL OBLIGATION** to the those who serve or have served, together with their families. They deserve our respect and support, and fair treatment

What NHSEI & the Constitution says:

Being flagged as a veteran in your NHS medical notes will help to ensure that you are able to **ACCESS** dedicated services for those who have served in the UK armed forces.

You shall not face **DISADVANTAGE** from accessing appropriate health services, particularly if you're on a waiting list for medical treatment.

Veterans personalised care programme – Choice & control over LTC

All veterans are entitled to **PRIORITY** access to NHS care (including hospital, primary or community care) for conditions associated with their time within the armed forces (**SERVICE RELATED**).

But this is always subject to **CLINICAL NEED** and doesn't entitle you to jump the queue ahead of someone with a higher clinical need.

Served in UK armed forces for **1 day**. Family member, Reservist (veteran when not deployed)

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Grand Reunion:	18 – 20 March 2022, Leeds, Yorkshire
ATS Memorial:	15 May 2022, Gt Yarmouth, Norfolk
Armed Forces Day:	25 June 2022 - National event – Scarborough, Yorkshire. And around the country
Summer Event:	30 July, NMA, Staffs
Remembrance:	10 November - Field of Remembrance, London 13 November - Guildford Borough Cenotaph, London

Veterans in the NHS

The serving armed forces receive world class care from the Defence Medical Service (DMS). When discharged, or whilst a reservist who is not on active service, the NHS provides all their care needs

Needs

MOD Annual Population Survey (2015) findings:

- Older age profile
- 40.1% reporting long term condition.
- Most commonly: musculoskeletal, cardiovascular, respiratory, mental health
- Younger cohort report highly complex multiple traumas from recent conflicts

Challenges

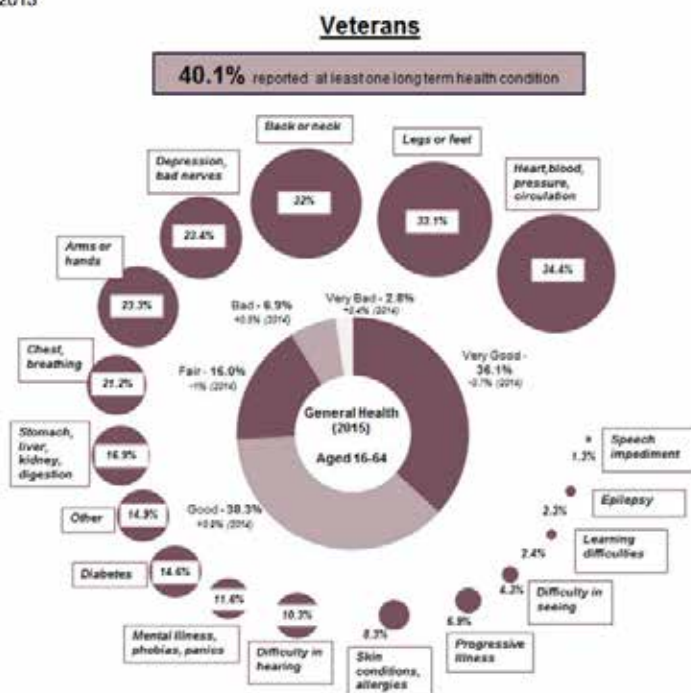
- Transfer from DMS to NHS is not seamless
- Dislocation is more common for veterans and reservists, which can lead to disadvantage in accessing NHS services
- NHS GPs and Trust's unaware of veterans' status and failing to refer veterans to appropriate services e.g. mental health or charity provided rehabilitation

Opportunities

There are already beacons of best practice in the NHS

- The NHS and DMS now benefit from sharing facilities and skills
- Working with service charities improves quality of care for veterans
- NHS employment of skilled veterans and reservists
- Sharing best practice between Trusts

Figure 2: General health status and long term health conditions¹ reported by UK Armed Forces veterans and non-veterans² aged 16-64 residing in Great Britain, estimated percentage³ 2015



- Overall health of veterans is similar to the general population
- Within this there are some significant differences
- The most prevalent long-term health conditions are:
 - Musculoskeletal
 - Cardiovascular
 - Respiratory
 - Mental health

Overview of the manifesto standards

1. This Trust understands and is compliant with the Armed Forces Covenant
2. This Trust has a clearly designated veterans' champion
3. This Trust supports the UK Armed Forces as an employer
4. Staff in this Trust are trained and educated in the needs of veterans
5. This Trust has established links to appropriate nearby veteran services
6. This Trust identifies veterans to ensure they receive appropriate care
7. This Trust will refer veterans to other services as appropriate
8. This Trust raises awareness of veterans

Progress so far:

48% (99) of English NHS Trusts are Veteran Aware, plus 2 in devolved Nations
All 222 Trusts will be accredited by 11 November 2022
Buddying system in place to support Trusts through accreditation process
Evidence is set against the 8 criteria shown above

The VCHA is keen to work with the Association to promote its work and progress, but in the meantime – if you speak to, or see, a health professional please ensure you highlight that you are a veteran and ask if our GP practice is appropriately registered.

Overview of the manifesto standards

- 1 This Trust understands and is compliant with the Armed Forces Covenant
- 2 This Trust has a clearly designated veterans' champion dyad
- 3 This Trust supports the UK Armed Forces as an employer
- 4 Staff in this Trust are trained and educated in the needs of veterans
- 5 This Trust has established links to appropriate nearby veteran services
- 6 This Trust identifies veterans to ensure they receive appropriate care
- 7 This Trust will refer veterans to other services as appropriate
- 8 This Trust raises awareness of veterans



"Your very welcome support for these extra costs has been very timely, and has allowed us to keep XX in XX, a place that she now views as home. The whole family is extremely delighted and relieved that you have made this award. Thank you very much one again from us all". £50 pw Care Enhancement Grant - Nursing Home Fee Top Up

"I would like to thank you for all the help the last few years. The money is a god send as I can get proper food as I'm diabetic and on insulin. Thank you again". £40 per week PRMF Annual Maintenance Grant

"I would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart for the assistance you have given me. If it weren't for your help I wouldn't have been able to move into my flat". £574.97 for white goods.

Branch News

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.

We know that for many branches 'meetings' have taken a different format to the past 'normal' – going on-line, to telephone, etc. We also know that many of you have continued keeping in touch via telephone, postcard/letters/cards, email etc and, where and when possible, meeting up for a catch-up and coffee. A few branches have sent in news (below) but a HUGE thank you to each and every one of you, whether as 'branches', Areas or individuals, for continuing to 'Support Women who Served', in whatever way and/or however that looked.

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.

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 Suebevers@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

Leicestershire & Nottinghamshire

Chris Corker

By the time this article is being read we shall be well into a new year. The members of the branch hope that everyone is keeping well and warm this winter. It has been quite a busy year compared to 2020 and Standard Bearer Lyn Wenham has been out and about on behalf of the branch. We would like to say a big thank you to Lyn for her dedication.



Rose, Ann and Lyn

July 14th: Lyn carried the standard at the funeral of Carole Murphy in Gedling, Nottingham.

31st: Rose Friend, Ann Gurney, Sue Stafford and Lyn with the standard enjoyed a great day at the NMA for the unveiling of the WRAC statue.

August 11th: Lyn carried the standard at Sue Taylor's funeral in Grantham. Also in attendance were Dot Ryder, Rose Barbour and Chris Corker.

17th: The branch held its first meeting for 16 months and we welcomed back 19 members. It was lovely to see everyone again.

September 12th: The Parachute Regt Service and Parade was attended by Lyn with the standard. The meeting began with a quick AGM. All officers were re-elected. There then followed a hilarious game of Bingo.

October 22nd: 12 members attended the funeral of Doris Doswell, one of the founder members of the branch, who passed away on 25th September.

30th: Debbie Kenny and Lyn attended the RBL Festival of Remembrance at the De Montfort Hall in Leicester. Earlier in the day Sue Slattery and Carol Morris sold poppies at the King Power Stadium.



Members at Doris' wake



Lyn and Debbie

November 9th: The branch held its annual Christmas Fayre with wine, mince pies, tea and coffee. There was a good selection of goodies to buy.

11th: Lyn paraded the standard at Leicester Market Place for the Remembrance Day Service.

14th: Carol Solomon attended Thurmaston Remembrance Service.



Debbie and Sue



Members browsing the goodies



Leicester Market Place for the Remembrance Day Service

Thurmaston Remembrance Service

We have had several members attaining their 90+ birthdays. They are Lily Salmon 100 on 18th July, Jo Latham 91 on 21st November and Cynthia Humble 96 on 30th December.

For those of you attending the Grand Reunion in Leeds we hope you have a fabulous time. Stay safe in these trying times.

Lincoln & District

Jo Worsdall



We would like to share this picture of our friendly Elf. We have been so good this year Santa sent him all the way from the North Pole to bring us greetings for Christmas. You're never too old to believe. xx Sylvia Stubbs & Marion King

As with most people we are still awaiting the go ahead for us to begin meeting regularly again. Fingers crossed by the time you are reading this we will be back at our venue monthly with plans to have days out and meals together. We

continue to keep in touch with each other throughout this challenging time with 'phone calls containing much laughter and a voice at the end of the line.

We were very fortunate to have our first 'in person' get together in December and for Christmas. It was soooo lovely to see some friendly faces not seen since March 2020 (our last Branch meeting). And although our numbers were low, we had a delicious Christmas meal with more than a sprinkling of great laughter and conversation, what a lovely afternoon.



Here's to the New Year; friends and absent friends; and the hope to all for a year of meeting together. All of our very best wishes for a safe and happy 2022 from Lincoln & District Branch.

Northern

Area Co-ordinator:

Lesley Roberts

Contact: northern.area@wraca.org.uk

Area Secretary: Helen Rowan.

Tel: 07714-950219

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

Cleveland

When: 12.30 4th Wednesday of the
month

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

Contact: Suzanne Allan

Tel: 07801571528

Email: s_i_allan@msn.com

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

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

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

Oldham

When: 19.00/19.15 3rd Wednesday of
the month

Where: Different restaurants – phone for
details

Contact: Kath Kirtley 07910925070

kathleenkirtley@gmail.com

or Susan Feeney 07813313508

susan4michael@yahoo.co.uk

Manchester

When: 11.00 2nd Sunday of the month

Where: The Swinging Bridge, Trafford
Boulevard, Trafford Park, M41 7JE

Contact: Pip Flegel 07375-095532

Email: pipflegel2009@gmail.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

Wirral

When: 19.30 1st Wednesday of the
month

Where: TA Centre, Chetwynd, Wexford
Road, Birkenhead, L43 9TF

Contact: Andrea Jenkins

Tel: 07808 648509

Grimsby
Gail Davy

The Grimsby Branch members have
survived the pandemic lockdown and
by September had their first meeting in
18 months. We have all kept very well
with no covid cases amongst us. We
went for a lunch together in July 2020 in
between lockdowns. It was good to be
able to hold a meeting in September and
exchange all the gossip from the past
year.



Gail Davy 40 year Poppy Appeal award



Betty Beeby 30 year Poppy Appeal award



Monica Barnes 25 year Poppy Appeal
award



Carole Tyler 25 year Poppy Appeal award



Pam Givens - 15 year Poppy Appeal award



5 Grimsby ladies with Poppy Appeal awards
presented by Gemma Leaning, Lincs
County Fundraising officer

The October meeting was our AGM at which all officers were once again voted back in. It was attended by Gemma Leaning the Royal British Legion County fundraiser for Lincolnshire, who presented awards for those ladies that help with the annual poppy appeal. Our secretary Gail Davy is the appeal organiser for Grimsby and raises many thousands of pounds each year with the help of her volunteers.



The week after our meeting was our Christmas lunch which, as usual, was a great success and delicious, leaving us all in a festive mood for the next meeting to celebrate with mince pies and a non-alcoholic drink.



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

Where: Allanpark Hotel, 20 Allanpark, Stirling, FK8 2QG

Contact: Liz Dixon Tel: 01786 743635

Ulster

When: Meetings 3-4 times per year

Where: Location varies, 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

Aberdeen



Huge thanks to Mhairi for being Aberdeen's 'point of contact'. For personal reasons she has opted to step back from that position, but still remains a part of the branch. Please contact Helen Jephcote, Area Co-ordinator, if you are interested in joining the branch for an event.

Fife & Tayside

Margaret Selfridge



Fife & Tayside continued to hold their monthly lunch meetings from June. The Salutation Hotel bar was an ideal location, we were well spaced out and the staff were very helpful. At the end of November we also held our Christmas lunch and raffle there in a private room. A big thank you to Mary Laurie who, although she could not attend the lunch, dropped in to say hello and leave something for the raffle.



Florence Green, Elizabeth Bradshaw



Debbie Coupland, Yvonne Allen, Barbara Farrow



Lily Bell, Florence Green



Denise Reddin and Helen Dixon

On Remembrance Day the branch was represented by myself, Barbara Farrow and Yvonne Allen. Barbara laid a wreath on behalf of the Association. She borrowed my beret which was a bit too big for her. We are all set for next year however as both she and Yvonne have bought new berets.



Barbara Farrow



Yvonne Allen, Margaret Selfridge, Barbara Farrow

We approach 2022 with hope that our lives may soon return to some sense of normality.

Stirling

Liz Dixon

We had their first wee get together back in September, 7 members attended (forgot to take photos). It was a good wee afternoon, a bite to eat and a couple of drinks in the Kilted Kangaroo. There was a lot of chatting/catching up as it was over a year and a half since last time we met up. The Kilted Kangaroo can be a rather social/noisy pub, so I arranged another meet with a couple of our more gentle ladies at a later date.

On 9th October picked-up Helen Burnett, then met Anne Bothwick and Lynn Connelly at the Dutch Inn for a spot of lunch. Great to see all were keeping well. At the age of 96 Helen is our oldest member and has some stories to tell. Over the lock downs Helen has been in contact with her buddy, that is/has been a great comfort to her.

Jean Halliday attended the remembrance parade at Camelon, representing the Stirling Branch. The WRAC fleece was spotted by a couple of other veterans in attendance.



Jean Halliday and Remembrance

December 11th we had our Christmas get together, afternoon tea in the Great Halls of Stirling Castle with 13 association members in attendance. The walk up to the castle over the cobbles was dreich but well worth the effort as we were full of festive cheer. Once we entered the Great Hall and took our seats, we were roasty toasty. The plates of sandwiches, scones and little fancies were delicious. Happily washed down with a cup of tea or coffee by the ladies, the alkies wash it down with numerous glasses of Prosecco then mulled wine. Lynn Connelly and Kate Hughes [spot the clipe]. We all had a really great afternoon, lots of laughter followed by more laughter. Cheerio from Stirling



Ulster

Sylvia Connachan

Hello ladies. Have you all got your tea & coffee cups ready, to sit down and read the Lioness, all the stories, information, etc.? I'm going to enjoy reading what you all have been doing.

On the 28th August 2021, we had the dedication of our ATS/WRAC Bench, at Palace Bks, Hollywood. There was 13 ladies in attendance, plus we had 2 members from the Malay/ Borneo association and Marie's son Jim. The Padre officiating was Rev Andrew Rawding; was a lovely service. A big thank you to Albert Owens, his son Darren, and Paul, for organising the day for us. Palace Barracks has lovely Remembrance Gardens for a lot of Regiments. A great job. Thank you for making it happen. And lovely sunny weather for the day.



16th September 2021, Marie Jenkins, Sarah Cairns, Elizabeth Montgomery and myself, attended the Party in the Park, at Omagh, Barronscourt. Weather was good; concert was great. Good day had by all.



26th September 2021 - We went to Lough Erne, for the Veterans Boat Trip, organised by the Veterans Support office, Belfast. There was hot & cold buffet, the boat was disabled friendly, we also had a bar, and bar man. Unfortunately the weather was so bad we couldn't dock at the island. We are going to see about going in the summer 2022, everyone enjoying the day.



We had our AGM/ lunch, on 30th October 2021. It was our first AGM since covid started, was a good day, very productive. Organised a few outings.



Field of Remembrance, Belfast City Hall, 1st November 2021 - Sylvia Connachan laid a cross for our veteran's.

Remembrance Sunday 14th November 2021, Belfast City Hall. There was only one member from each association to be on parade. I, Sylvia Connachan, laid the wreath for the Ulster Branch WRAC, Joan McCabe laid the wreath for the Not Forgotten Association. The weather was kind to us.



We had our Christmas lunch 11th December 2021 - we all had a lovely day.



We're going to book next month for our February lunch, if we are able to, as government has some restrictions they are going to apply.

Marie Jenkins, Chrissy Tolcher and myself have booked to go to Leeds in March, all being well. It has been a long time since we have been over, we are looking forward to seeing you all again.

Joan McCabe was invited to Hillsborough Castle, for Prince Charles' 21 gun salute, and met a girl from the Royal Artillery Reserves.



From the Ulster Branch, we hope all of you have a Merry Christmas & Happy New Year. Everyone have a great 2022. 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,

amandamfoster@hotmail.co.uk

Tel: 07788 316596

I would love to say that I have seen everyone, we had shared laughs and caught up, but this is still not case. Any catch up has been via an email or chat on the telephone – which isn't ideal but the only way some of the branches are operating. I completely understand the cautious work but still desperate to catch up with everyone face to face at some point. Some branches are managing to carry out safe meetings and even some walks with the promise of cream teas at the end of the walk.

I know Swindon have sent an article in, but definitely a shout out to these and especially Rose Kilpatrick who took the lead and has been encouraging everyone to return to the fold. They had an outstanding Remembrance Parade – got a mention by the Town Mayor as well. Salisbury Branch also did their first Remembrance Parade for some twenty years and a separate article by a member is listed.

A mini-Christmas luncheon for the area took place with Salisbury Branch and it was good to see faces from Torquay/Torbay, Plymouth, and even across the water from the Isle of Wight, Winchester and our Andover ladies joined us. We hope that next year we can have a true Area Christmas Lunch and a bit further West for everyone to join us.

To all branches and members, I wish you festive break and here's to a kinder and safe 2022.

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

When: Bi-monthly

Where: Various venues around the Isle of Wight

Contact: Tracy Biddlecombe.

Tel: 07980-673402

or Email: tracyelizabeth@live.co.uk

New Forest

Contact: Madge Evans

Tel: 01425 620995

Plymouth

Contact: Jean Cundy-Borge

Tel: 01752 567844

or Evon Roberts Tel: 01752 215780

Portsmouth

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

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: 07787763779,
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
Contact: Di Lawrence
Tel: 01308 425149

Winchester

When: 2nd Thursday of January, March, September and November plus a summer outing
Where: Location varies depending on lunch or evening meeting
Contact: Herme Emary
winchester18.wrac.sec@gmail.com

Bristol

Judith Stinchcombe

In August 2021 I was invited to meet with Sir Keir Starmer, Leader of Her Majesty's Opposition, at the Soldiers of Gloucester Museum. 12 members were drawn from RBL and SAFFA to meet and discuss the Armed Forces Covenant and the Health

and Wellbeing of the Armed Forces Veterans. The meeting with Sir Keir took away the following points: Enforceability, Transparency, Best Practice, Accountability and Periodic Review, Sharing of Best Practice, Involving the Ministry of Defence and Social Services to be delivered by the Armed Forces Covenant. Already we have seen some good things come out of this meeting here in Gloucester.



Judith & Sir Keir Starmer at Veterans Covenant meeting

During the summer the Bristol Branch welcomed Belle Jenkinson; she has moved to Bristol to be nearer her daughter. An active member of the Association and Dinner Club she has already proved to be an asset to us, welcome Belle.

Angie and myself attended Remembrance in London - Saturday night at the Royal Albert Hall and Sunday with other WRAC Ladies on Horse Guards. The gin and tonic on a Thames river boat afterwards was very welcome; good to meet up with old friends. Helen laid a wreath in her home village of Axbridge and other members were out and about too; we were well represented.



Judith & Angie at Remembrance 2021

Tuesday 7th December we attended the Funeral of Joyce Millward. Joyce was coming up to her 101st birthday and served during WW2 as a cook in the ATS. Thanks to all the veterans who attended to give this great lady respect.

Life has started to open up for us. Some ladies, not all, have started to join together to walk and lunch every month. Our branch meetings have commenced

in a spacious pub, for now, with the opportunity for lunch for those who want to stay on. We have invitations to a number of Christmas lunches with other veterans, particularly looking forward to meeting with the Aden Veterans in Wotton.

Bristol Branch meets at 12.00 noon on the first Thursday in each month, email or telephone for the location as the Baptist church remains closed for the moment.



Branch walk to Wookey Hole

Isle of Wight

Tracy Biddlecombe

Activities and get togethers have been very restrictive due to the pandemic. However, in September 2021 members from the IW attended a 'Not Forgotten organisation' drive-in Summer Garden party for Veterans at The Grange, Alresford, Hants. 60 cars attended and we enjoyed great music from live singers/dancers on stage and a wonderful complimentary picnic lunch provided on the day. The day was very enjoyable, refreshing after a difficult lockdown and set in a beautiful backdrop of the Grange estate.



The Not Forgotten Association's summer Drive-in Garden Party at The Grange, Alresford, Hants

In December 2021 two members attended an open area invitation from Amanda Foster and the Salisbury Branch for members to attend join their Christmas lunch/weekend at the Milford Hall Hotel. It was great fun, and lovely to meet other WRAC members in our area and network. Thank you so much for inviting us, ladies! After the meal we visited a local church in Salisbury to view their Christmas tree festival, where the Salisbury Branch had a WRAC tree which was a nice surprise to see as we walked around the church. Some visitors gave very positive comments. We followed this with drinks at a local pub in the city square sitting outside surrounded by lots of large tall trees that had been decorated in fairy lights - it was all very Christmassy.



Viewing Salisbury's Christmas Tree at church Festival



Christmas celebrations with Salisbury branch

Finally, recently, we have been in consultation with the Portsmouth Branch regards the proposal of an amalgamation. As a consequence of this, it has been decided that as we already have forged strong links with the Portsmouth Branch (having built up a positive rapport with members over the past 3 years) an amalgamation would further cement the advantages, and it is with delight I can announce that from January 2022 we will be jointly known as the Portsmouth & IW Branch. I am planning to stand down as IW Branch Secretary in the New Year. However, I will continue to act a contact person on the Isle of Wight, for WRAC members, which we feel is necessary due to our unique geography and being an island.

Plymouth

Jean Cundy-Borge Evon Roberts

What a depressing year this has been with 'lockdowns', 'vaccinations' and now 'boosters'. In spite of all this the Plymouth ladies have still managed to get together for coffee and a chat each month for the last 6 months in a suitable room in the "Moments cafe and Memory hub" (69a New George Street Plymouth PL1 1RJ). This room was booked by Evon as it can hold 15 people with space around them.

To round up the year our Christmas lunch was arranged during one of these meetings and 16 members and supporters attended the lunch at Tamar View Restaurant and all agreed it was a superb meal enjoyed by everyone. Jane organised the raffle, which was held during the lunch, it was well supported and so Evon was able to send £140 to support the Lioness.

So now we all look forward to our family Christmas and our next meeting which will be held at the same cafe on the 4th Tuesday of January 2022. Please get in touch with Evon if you are able to attend because the room size is limited to 15.

We hope you all enjoyed a Happy and Healthy Christmas and New Year.

Portsmouth

Val Duke

Portsmouth is beginning to pick up again after a period of restricted activity. Our AGM was hosted by Sally and officers elected. The annual remembrance service has been reinstated to its' usual format and our standard was carried by Sally. We welcomed a new member, Yvonne Austin, to our coffee mornings which have returned to a regular monthly basis, one hosted by Megan but now at the Maritime Club, where we are able to once again hold our Christmas Luncheon (and a sumptuous time was had by all as can be seen in the photo).



Phyllis and Sally also went over to the IW to celebrate with Rose on her 102nd birthday. Rose was one of the three members presented to the Countess of Wessex at the centenary celebrations. Recently, we have been in consultation with the IW branch regards the proposal of an amalgamation. It has been decided that as we already have strong relationships with the branch (having built up a positive rapport with members over the past few years) an amalgamation would further cement the close links already established, and it is with pleasure I can announce that from January 2022 we will be jointly known as the Portsmouth and IW Branch.

We do, however, end the year on some sad news; that of the death of Kay Seagrove. Kay was a committed member of the branch and will be missed by all those who knew her.

Salisbury

Sally Elizabeth Willoughby Amanda Foster

Christmas Tree Festival St Thomas's Church, Salisbury – every year there is a great Festival in our local City church and this year we took part!

It all started with an arranged clandestine meeting, in a car park, between Amanda Foster and myself. The 'enormous' 4ft tree and lights were duly handed over together with the fabulous Salisbury Branch member labels. These labels had the WRAC cap badge on one side and an individual picture of our members on the other! They looked really amazing! A big thank you to Carol Martin, Amanda and Fi for getting these printed and attached to the labels after overcoming a few unforeseen technical issues.



Christmas Tree Festival

Monday arrived and off I went to St Thomas Church, with said tree under my arm, and was greeted by Jenny Fidler and Linda Cooper for much appreciated help. On arrival the church volunteers, who were really friendly, advised us of our location number. We were absolutely delighted to see that the WRAC tree had been placed by the Royal British Legion standards, very fitting we felt. We dove straight in and the tree was primed, lights strung with flair and the labels attached with red baubles - Jenny bought those together with a camouflage net to go around the base, inspired! The tree was duly topped with a miniature WRAC flag and looked wonderful.

The tree's aim was to raise awareness of the Salisbury branch and to let any female veteran know that there is a local WRAC branch offering support and friendship, so extra labels were added with various media contact details together with telephone numbers. Let's hope we manage to reach a few veterans out there.

I do have to mention that St Thomas's Church was a marvellous location with absolutely stunning stained-glass windows, a wonderful backdrop to the Christmas tree festival and of course our own fabulous entry.

Sally Elizabeth Willoughby

Salisbury is ticking along with monthly gatherings, numbers still slightly down from pre-Covid but with the help of a large room, fresh air and dedicated members we generally gather a good 12-15 Ladies each month. Monthly newsletters keep everyone up to date.

We have walked, talked, quizzed, decorated Christmas Trees, caused chaos at the local Harvester when we had a particularly hilarious supper. At this event we welcomed some new ladies – some still serving, and they were pleasantly surprised that it wasn't all zimmer frames and knitting, but a group with a wide age range, a spring in our steps and a sense of adventure!

Our branch has a strong presence with the local Armed Forces Veterans Breakfast Club, which is an ideal place to make more friends and contacts. This offers many extra social events and support that we have all taken onboard and joined in with.

Mention must be made of Karen Langley who works for Alabare and is the power behind a combined Coffee Morning every Friday for all Veterans in Salisbury. This is regularly attended and supported by our Branch. Karen was part of the team along with Amanda who also did The Big Sleep Out at The Tower of London – being a big kid that just wants to camp it wasn't really a challenge but a privilege

to take part in and sleep on those historic cobbles! This was in aid of Homes for Veterans.

Remembrance Parade was fabulous – thanks to everyone that came along especially Patsy who came from Basingstoke to join us. This was no mean task as rail journeys were cancelled that weekend due to the Salisbury rail crash. We featured in the local online photographs, so that helps remind people we are here in Salisbury.



Great prize table very much boosted by kind donations from Cathy Munro



Brenda Edwards winning cracking Christmas cake donated by Armed Forces Vets breakfast



Even a bit of dancing!

As already mentioned, we had a cracking Christmas lunch – well it must have been good as I got home at 2100 and I was one of the first to leave. Joking aside it was delightful to see some new faces and old friends from last year come to see us again. We were all looking forward to catching up and there was even some dancing!

We have a busy year planned ahead and hope to have a good number of members going to Leeds in March – I find it hard to believe that its 3 years since the last Grand Reunion and the restart of our Branch. Personally, I am very proud of the Branch and the support community we have with everyone helping out. Whatever 2022 brings us we will all move forward with our normal sense of humour, positive attitude as well as a sense of adventure and yet another test cotton bud up our nose!

Southampton

Jean Doe

Hello everyone. You will probably never have another start of a report like this - I'm sat in my car waiting for the breakdown vehicle, and attempting to write this!

Like all it has been the most terrible time, but those who went had a very enjoyable day with the Not Forgotten's 'Let's Rock' at Alresford – a really brilliant time. The Not Forgotten really go out of their way and we found out what good singing voices Rosie and Anne have. Apart from the food and drink and having to stay near your vehicle it was so very well organised.

We were invited by Salisbury to help form a Guard of Honour at a member's funeral held at Romsey. This was really incredible – bagpipes were fantastic and attendance in general; also the Army Cadets are very well trained. This lady had a very good send off; we were so pleased to have been invited.

Most of us have given a hand to poppy selling and its been fortunate to watch people with children and the card machines have certainly helped.

This morning I saw the 'plug' on BBC1 regarding the book Army Girls. One of our members, Penny Bailey made some contribution to the book but sadly died last mid-December just two months short of 100 and the Queen's birthday card. Every branch would love a 'Penny'.

Last week we were able to have lunch all together at a new venue. Although we did not have great praise for the food, we made up for the group, and the chatter! Covid has so much to answer for. Anyway, we have a new venue for a lunch in January 2022.

We wish you all a Happy and Healthy Christmas and New Year with an extra wish for 2022 to be completely free of all restrictions etc. Good cheer

Swindon

Rose Kilpatrick

As you can below, we have had a few 'personnel' changes at Swindon, and I don't have a clue about things that could go into the Lioness from Swindon. I have had lots of dealings with Curious PR, especially about Swindon WRAC Branch being the first to lay a wreath at the town's Remembrance Parade - which I had the pleasure of laying. We had 7 ladies march too, which was amazing.

October - We had a great visit to RAF Lyneham to their REME museum. Well worth a visit.

November - we had a brewery trip where 20 family and friends were able to join us for a tour of the local Arkels Brewery.

We also lined up with other veterans to parade to the Swindon Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday.

Torbay & Area

Pauline Marr

Some of the recent activities we have participated in:

- Walk and lunch in Haldon Forest organised by Mandy.
- Lunch at the Boathouse where 2 new members join us, welcome Sue & Terri.
- Meet up at Oldway Mansion.
- Remembrance Day - 5 of us joined the parade where Terri laid our WRAC wreath.
- Lisa attended The Animal Remembrance at Poppington.



Several of us have joined Veterans Outdoors taking part in some of their workshops including a trip around Bigbury Mint where our medals are made. We also made our own silver ring and learnt a bit about enamelling. Other workshops have included birds of prey, bee keeping, alpaca walking, a willow workshop; the list goes on. Everyone who has taken part in these workshops have really enjoyed participating and learning something new amongst great company. Lots more planned for next year, including walks on Dartmoor.

We took a trip to Plymouth, with Di acting as tour guide showing us around her home town with lots of local knowledge. We had a fish & chips lunch in remembrance of Kath Tozer, a local ATS lady who had recently died. We also joined Plymouth ladies at their monthly lunch meet up.

We travelled to Salisbury and joined in their Christmas dinner. Lovely meal and company; even managed a bit of dancing. Our last trip before Xmas is to Jingle Bell Rock Christmas Drive-in, organised by Not Forgotten.

We are a small but growing group. Next year we are looking to meet up monthly with the hope that more members will join us and maybe other groups will pay us a visit.

Winchester

Herme Emary

Like many other Branches Winchester was finally able to come together for a face-to-face meeting in July. Because of some restrictions still being in place I invited everyone to my house for a party in the garden. My oven was working overtime heating the buffet lunch. A very good turnout considering the restrictions and everyone was soon chatting away catching up with what they had been doing since lockdown started. The weather turned out to be very hot, which was nice but did require head coverings for some. And I ran out of chairs, but it was great to see everyone.



Seated: Margaret, Sandy, Jane, Lynn, Lesley, Sheila. Standing: Rowena and Emma

In September it was decided to visit our favourite Winchester restaurant The Porterhouse. Again, another good turnout and we welcomed Helen, a new member who was joining us for the first time. Once again it did not take very long to catch up with everyone. An excellent meal with excellent company.



Denise, Lesley, Kim, Daphne



Maggie, Lynn, Helen, Herme

In November it was decided to do something a little different and visit a small out of the way place called Piecarumba. The menu was very simple Pie, Mash and Mushy pees (or Baked Beans) served on an enamel plate. Retro wall decorations and games, no alcohol, but a good selection of soft drinks, tea coffee. There were only five of us, but we were able to have a good chat. One of the best meals that I have had for a long time.



Margaret, Herme, Lynn, Ray. Emma took the photo

By the time you read this Christmas and New Year will be a thing of the past and we should have had our January meeting with no new restrictions. Continue to stay safe everyone.

Wales & The West

Area Co-ordinator:

Barbara Anderson

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

Tel: 07921 832094

One of the things which has become obvious over the past two years, is just how flexible and resourceful our Branches are. Meetings and outings have been happening, despite the restrictions put upon us by Covid 19. The various reports which follow this introduction will demonstrate how much fun you can have whilst wearing a face mask. We even managed to hold our Area Reunion and AGM in Shrewsbury, thanks to the hospitality and organisational skills of Phoenix Branch.



We are looking forward to a very busy year ahead. See you all in Leeds for the Grand Reunion.

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

Where: The Coffee Bean, Trident

Shopping Centre, Dudley

Contact: Babs Anderson

Tel: 07921-832094

Gloucestershire

Contact: Frances Fairclough

Tel: 07739-344846

Email: fran.f@btopenworld.com

Ann Stack, anndeusnip@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 of alternate months, 12.30 for lunch

Where: Littlebury Hotel, Bicester

Contact: Christine Townsend

Tel: 07756 681441

Phoenix

A regional informal Branch covering Wales, parts of the Midlands and NW

When: Every 3 months

Contact: Maggie Purkis

Tel: 01952 251717 or 07808 139543

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 Marie Smedley (Secretary) on

marie.tamworth.branch@gmail.com

Worcester

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

Contact: Jane Griffin-Ash

Tel: 07880732245

Email janebash@hotmail.co.uk.

Facebook: 'Worcestershire WRAC Group'

Birmingham

Babs Anderson

Since I last reported on the goings on at Brum Branch, nothing much seems to have changed on the Covid 19 front. We continue to lurch from one set of restrictions to another, but we are always able to adapt and overcome.

We enjoyed attending the NMA for the WRAC Statue dedication, joining Hereford Branch for their annual picnic, beginning face to face Branch meetings, attending the Area Reunion, taking part, and supporting the truncated Cardiff 10k, dancing at the WRAC Dinner Club, tenpin bowling, marching at the Cenotaph and laughing our socks off at our Christmas Jumper Bash along with visitors from other Branches and Rowena Naile, Chairman of the Membership Council. Even during these difficult times, we have managed to keep busy.





The next thing on our list is our usual trip to the pantomime – oh yes, it is!

We are all looking forward to the Grand Reunion in Leeds and hope to see you all there too. It's going to be fabulous.

Cardiff

Deserie Mansfield

A short update from the Cardiff Branch where, like all branches, the Covid pandemic has affected the ability of members of the branch to meet face to face but we have continued to develop the branch and adapt as best we can.

With a revitalised administration (sounds like a Cabinet reshuffle), we would like to thank the ladies who have continued to support and help the branch develop to date and note particular thanks to Debbie Amphlet as she exits the Secretarial role. We are very pleased that Debbie has agreed to continue as Treasurer and now have a new secretary (Deserie Mansfield) and fledgling steering committee – still in the making and we welcome volunteers for continued development of the branch.



Steering Committee

With uncertainty about face-to-face meetings, we conducted a survey which showed that that our ladies feel events, speakers, zoom meetings and walking could offer an interesting opportunity for future activity, so we are in the process of developing a programme for future activity for the branch. For those who wish to meet in person we have re-launched our monthly meetings with a new date and time (2nd Tuesday of the month from 6pm at the Fox and Hounds, Whitchurch, Cardiff) where we welcome WRAC (and all serving or women veterans).

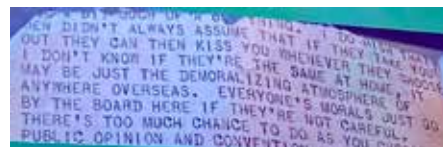
Gloucestershire

Ann Stack

How fortunate we were to attend Cheltenham Literature Festival in October which featured Betty Webb (ATS) aged 98, Jean (FANY) 96 and her sister Pat (WREN) also 98 years of age. Historian Tessa Dunlop spent many hours with these wonderful ladies and recorded their memories of service in her current book 'Army Girls'. There were certainly some very interesting anecdotes and hilarious moments during the event as well as extracts from letters the ladies had written to family during their Service. Betty Webb spoke eloquently about her time in the ATS, Bletchley Park and her time working in the Pentagon and who, like Jean and Pat, was determined to serve her Country. What an inspiration these wonderful women were and continue to be. We were in awe of their achievements and felt proud that The WRAC Association was mentioned during the event and that we had a group photograph with them. In true WRAC style, we finished the morning with a delicious lunch.



Cheltenham Literary Festival



Letter home (Army Girls)



Literary festival lunch

November saw members of our Branch attending Services of Remembrance throughout Gloucestershire and in our bordering Counties as well as representing The WRAC Association in London at The Cenotaph. What a privilege it is to be a Veteran and to remember those who have gone before and continue to serve.

December and the Festive Season was upon us. Our Branch decided on a trip to The Christmas Market at Gloucester Quays followed by lunch. An intrepid trio decided on a walk up to Painswick Beacon beforehand to earn their lunch and one of the said trio even invested in some new walking boots. Hmmm ... best laid plans and all of that: Storm Arwen arrived! Did that deter us? Well, yes to the walk because we would've been swept into the next county. And, yes to The Christmas Market because it was cancelled. Lunch – absolutely not! We battled through the wind and rain and had the tastiest of Christmas Lunches coupled with chat and smiles which was a great way to end the year.



Gloucestershire Branch wish you all a very happy, healthy and kind 2022.

Hereford

Lynda Armstrong

Since I last wrote for The Lioness magazine, we've had 1 new member join us, Tracey Fleming – welcome. This now takes us up to 64 members.

In July we finally managed to get to the unveiling of The WRAC Statue at The NMA. A really lovely day we all had despite the heavens opening at the exact time of it starting. However, it did not put a dampener on things, and it all went so very well. Many thanks to those at Head office for a lovely day out. A minibus was organised by Joyce Nicholls to bring

along some of our members, which was lovely of her to arrange, as some would have struggled to get there otherwise. Thank you, Joyce.



Louisa Ash, Annabelle Massey, Liz Milton and Anna Toon at NMA



Picnic time at NMA: Patsy Davis, Pauline Milnes, Miriam Unwin, Dawn Major and Jane Griffin-Ash

August, as always, brings us our much-awaited annual picnic at Queenswood Park. Again, rain tried to spoil things for us, but we all muddled through, and it was a great success as always. Joyce works so hard putting this together for us each year and we are all so very grateful to her. We even have members of other Branch's travel to join us for this lovely annual event



Branch picnic

Just 2 weeks after our annual picnic, we sadly lost one of our founder members, Mrs Mary Nicholls ATS. Mary, with a couple of other ladies back in 1989, got together in The Green Dragon Hotel in Hereford and started what has now become such a thriving WRAC Branch. Mary was such a huge part of Hereford Branch, and she was just 6 weeks short of her 99th birthday. We, as her Branch members, gave Mary a good send off with 12 of us in attendance with both Sharon Baker-Joyce and Heather Bradbury parading the Association and Branch Standards. Mary will be sorely missed by us all.



Mary Nicholls selling poppies



Mary Nicholls cutting branch 30th birthday cake

Due to the petrol shortage and a re-arranged family holiday, I myself was unable to attend our September and October monthly meetings, which was most annoying as life was only just starting to get back to some normality. Despite the lack of fuel, a few of our ladies still managed to get there (I think they were in need of some much needed WRAC Veterans socialising, it had been nearly 2 years).

In October, our Branch received our annual invite to attend The Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters anniversary of The Battle of Gheluvelt Remembrance service at Gheluvelt Park, Worcester. A few of our ladies attended and Sharon once again braved the elements and paraded our Association Standard, while Alison Brown laid our Association Wreath.



Sharon Baker-Joyce parading our Standard at Gheluvelt wearing her new association raincoat.

November's Remembrance Service held at Whitehall, was attended by a few of our Branch ladies while others paid their respects locally. Sharon Baker-Joyce paraded our Standard whilst Barbara Davies laid our Branch Wreath in Hereford and I myself laid a WRAC in my home village.



We had our AGM and final meeting of the year at the end of November. There was a very good turn out and it gave the feeling that normality was returning.

We, as a Branch, were sent an invite to The Hereford & Worcester Grenadier Guards Christmas Lunch in Smeite Worcester. A dozen of us accepted their kind invitation and it, as in past times, was very enjoyable. We have been given a verbal invite to their Anniversary in 2022, which we will look forward to attending.

Miriam Unwin arranged an afternoon tea for a few of the ladies on the 9th December. This was initially aimed at the more senior ladies of the Branch, hoping to get them out of the house

for a few hours in place of an evening meeting. There were only 10-15 spaces available and 11 of them showed an interest. It was held at The First Light Veterans Trust in Hereford and they had such a good day with a lovely choice of sandwiches, cakes and jam and cream scones, which went down very well. Seems they had so much they even took home doggy bags. Thank you very much for arranging this for us all Miriam.



Afternoon tea: Gillian Bastin, Barbara Davies, Alison Brown and Margaret Davies



Afternoon tea: Liz Starbuck, Anna Toon, Doreen Charman, Miriam Unwin and Annabelle Massey

One of our ATS ladies Mrs Jean Butler, sadly took a fall in November and landed herself in hospital with a broken hip. She's now at home convalescing. We all wish Jean the very best with her recovery.

I hope you have all had a safe and pleasant Christmas and I send each and every one of you best wishes for a very Happy New Year. Keep safe, help the country by doing what's being asked of us and hopefully see you all in 2022.

Marches & Mid-Wales

Elaine Smith

Well, it certainly has been a long time since you heard from us – partly because the Covid restrictions meant that we weren't able to physically meet up, but the other reason is, well, my fault, brain fog, poor memory, call it what you want.

Fortunately, we had our AGM on 20th October and our fantastic Secretary, Michelle Boyden blew away the cobwebs in her inimitable style by producing and

distributing a very thick set of minutes to each of us prior to the meeting and, for those of us who may not have had the right spectacles on, she read-out every single word of it. Those of you who attended the Mid-Wales Reunion in Shrewsbury will know exactly what I mean – but I say "Thank Goodness, because now I have something to prompt my brain into action and get something down for our Lioness contribution".



So what's happened since we hosted our Area AGM in Newtown in September 2019?

- We managed a pre-Christmas Branch Meeting at the end of November that year at The Lakeside Golf Club and Restaurant Garthmyl (so of course we had our pre-Christmas lunch there as well – oh, and the obligatory raffle where EVERYONE gets a prize whether they like it or not).

- Nov 2019 - As always, Deanna and her husband ran the area Poppy Appeal and Pauline and Gill helped out on the stand set up in Morrisons. Carys laid a

Wreath of Poppies at her church in Clun and having discovered a War Grave of an ATS lady 'Cpl Mary Agnes Wheeler who died on 11 Jan 1946 aged 30 yrs' she now tends to that grave laying a poppy and wooden cross in respect. Elaine played 'The Last Post' on her cornet at her local village cenotaph and Pauline laid a wreath at the Cenotaph in Newtown, Powys.

- February 2020 brought rain and floods yet still our members braved (and in some cases ignored) the "Road Closed Due to Flooding" signs to get to The Green Dragon pub near Welshpool.

- March 2020 – Covid struck. Like everyone else we were unable to hold any face-to-face meetings for 18 months but Michelle managed to set up a Branch Group on Messenger so that group video chats were possible. Plenty of "I can hear you but I can't see you" or "I can see you but can't hear you" or "can you hear me or see me" and lost connections, plus time delays causing people to talk over each other (although this also appears to happen during our live meetings too – just saying). These 'meetings' were mainly catch-up rather than official and there was even a virtual Birthday Party/Celebration lunch for Carys at one point.

- During the whole of lockdown some of our members suffered personal losses, illness and health scares so having a Branch Group set up on Messenger meant that people were able to share their worries and others offered kind words of comfort, help and support.

- March 2021 – virtual HQ AGM – thank you Carys for 'attending' and taking notes and also to Deanna for tuning in. Now we are proudly able to welcome Deanna (ex-Australian Air Force) as a fully-fledged member of the WRAC Association with full voting rights but saying that, we've never considered her anything else but 'one of us'. Despite the Covid restrictions still in force Deanna, her husband and their collection team managed to raise £8,500. They have been Area Poppy Organisers now for 20 years.

- Aug 2021 – Reduced Restrictions meant that those of us in Wales could now meet up with those on t'other side of the border in England and we did just that. Nothing could be better than Sweeny Hall in Oswestry on a beautiful, warm, sunny day – chatter, food, obligatory raffle and a great welcome to our newest member Bernie Dolan. I'm sure many of you know Bernie – especially those of my era (1973-1975) and those who played sport during that time. It was great to see a new face and add another lively personality to our group.

• Sep 2021 – Area AGM and Reunion organised by Phoenix Branch at the Beaconsfield Club in Shrewsbury. Four of our members attended – Michelle, Gill, Elaine and Sue. A great meeting, an interesting guest speaker Rowena Naile MBE and a fun quiz. I hope that Rowena eventually found her brooch. If anyone wants a breakdown of what was brought up at the Area AGM, then I am sure that Michelle won't mind sending you a copy from our branch minutes as it is very comprehensive and even gives you page numbers of where you will find the relevant information within the Lioness. Just make sure you have plenty of paper in your printer. (By the way Michelle, see these black blobs at the beginning of each of these paragraphs, they're called 'Bullet Points' tee hee, or as you techno buffs say 'LOL').

• Oct 2021 - WRAC Dinner Club, Nottingham. Four of our members booked to attend but unfortunately, due to ill health poor Michelle was unable to join us. For those of us who did attend (Sue, Gill and Elaine) there was a spare 3-course dinner going so we ate it. The strawberry chocolate fudge brownie was particularly nice, and we've put a picture on here so that Michelle knows what she missed. Sorry about the starter and main course though ... we'd eaten it before we thought about taking a photo.



• 20 Oct 2021 – Our Branch AGM at the Lakeside Golf Course and Restaurant Garthmyl. It is a central meeting point for the majority of our members and a lovely place to eat too. I think the fact that it is a Golf Club helps, knowing that Bernie Dolan loves golf, and so we had more chance of luring her to our second meeting knowing that we hadn't scared her off at the September branch baptism. There were 11 of us this time as we brought along a new 'possible' member, Wendy (nee Southall W/425453). Wendy joined in 1964 for a couple of years as a Supply Spec. We are hoping that she will officially join us

when our membership fees are due in January next year. I'm sure the prospect of a compulsory raffle at every meeting is a great selling point especially when everyone wins a prize.

That's where we are now, poppies on display and Deanna organising her helpers, optimistic that this will be her last year of being the area poppy organiser ... but don't hold your breath, Deanna. On the other hand, I (Elaine) will not be holding my breath otherwise no notes will come out of my cornet when I join my band (Newtown Silver Band) as we give a short al fresco Remembrance Concert in the local shopping centre on 6th Nov.

Thank you to all our members for supporting each other over the last year and a half and especially for Michelle, without whom this article would probably not have been written in such detail despite the bullet points.

Phoenix

Sheila Johnson

At the Wales and the West AGM, held in September 2021, the Branch Secretaries gave their accounts of the previous 12 months activities. These were somewhat lessened by COVID restrictions, of course, but provided encouragement enough for Branch Committees to plan ahead.

Tamworth Branch is to host the 2022 AGM. All good wishes to them for success, and for Lioness Branches countrywide to stay safe.



Shropshire

Sandra Davies

Well, it's that time again! A big hello from us all here at the Shropshire Branch and it is very much hoped that my ramblings find you all fit and well. Since our last piece, we have been out and about terrorising the countryside!

As mentioned at the end of my last piece, we had been invited to the Royal Signals breakfast club. The photo that I have used is of Jacko, Chris and Joyce, who were together in the same training company. How wonderful is that.



Jacko, Chris and Joyce at Royal Signals breakfast club

Moving on, one of our members, Debbie Wilson and her husband Andrew, put together yet another fun packed German extravaganza. It's fast becoming a regular date on the Shropshire Branch calendar!



German extravaganza

Jogging into September and over to the Hereford Branch picnic. The weather wasn't too kind for them, but they still managed a smile for the camera. What's more amazing, they behaved themselves!



At Hereford branch picnic

We were in attendance for the Wales and the West AGM and Reunion, hosted this year by the Phoenix Branch at the Beaconsfield Club, in Shrewsbury. The girls were well behaved, well they had to be!

A number of our branch made the trip down to London for Remembrance Sunday. The weather was kind to them, thankfully. They were seen on the TV coverage, just before airtime was up!

Also in November, our very own thespian Shirley Gladwin, was treading the boards again, with the Horsehay Amateur Dramatic Society, in their production of Trivial Pursuits. I took my sister along and we had such a laugh, we can't wait for the next one in March. No doubt Shirley will make one or two reminders before then!

Then it's headlong into good old December, which we can also call, "Elastic Waistband" season! Our first Crimbo outing was to the Birmingham Branch Christmas lunch. This is one of our must go to events! It's been a quest of the Shropshire Branch to get the coveted award of Best Table Centrepiece and this year they managed it, woo hoo!



Birmingham Christmas Lunch - Best table decoration



Shropshire branch Christmas dinner

Then to finish with, our own Branch members-only dinner, at the ever-popular Beaconsfield Club in Shrewsbury. It was absolutely fantastic to see so many of the members out after dark and having a blast of a time!

Well, there you have it, the coming and goings of the Shropshire Branch. We would like to say that ALL the events have been marvellous, the food has been delicious, but the main ingredient and always will be, is the wonderful company that we have come across and to be honest, I can't ever see that changing.

We wish you one and all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. May God be with you until our paths cross again.

Tamworth

Chris Whitehead



Hello again, that time went quickly! Well, our merry band have gone from not doing much to being really busy, as a group but also the individuals. We are only a small group but this last few months, members have been involved in:

- Volunteering at local vaccine hub
- Membership and attendance for some of us at RBL meetings
- Visiting the NMA for walks with friends
- Volunteering at the NMA
- Volunteering at a charity shop
- Telephone buddy for the RBL
- Standard Bearer for a WRAC veteran funeral (RIP)
- Organising the Poppy Appeal for local area
- Manning Poppy appeal stalls within the area

Phew makes me tired typing it, well done to all our members; feel I've missed

something, I'm sure they will remind me for next time? We have also expanded our group slightly, a big welcome to Sylvia, Fiona, Audrey and Pam.

As a group we have managed to meet up regularly this year, usually on a Friday lunch but we meet at various locations around our large area.

In June it was at the new outlet centre in Cannock, lovely lunch and shopping, what better? - the haribo shop was quite a favourite.

For our July get together quite a number of us attended the WRAC statue event. Really enjoyed that one, lovely to meet up with others from across the country, we are so lucky to be close by.



Tamworth branch at July NMA Statue event

August saw us lunching in a café in Lichfield opposite the wonderful cathedral.

September was the Wales and West AGM which was attended and enjoyed by a few of our members, thanks to Phoenix branch for organising; notes were made ready for our turn next year.

October already, where has this year gone? Lunch at the Globe in Tamworth, and booked our Christmas meal there it was so nice.

November, a busy month; a few visited Lichfield Cathedral to wonder at the poppy display; Pat and Lesley went to remembrance event on the 11 November at the NMA; a few of us attended the Tamworth Remembrance event on the Sunday and went on for a lovely lunch, the soldier shaped tree was the backdrop for our group photo; two of our group participated in the London event at the Cenotaph - Audrey with the WRAC and Elaine with the Cadets. Well done to all there, the march past looked brilliant: later in the week we went on to meet at Barton Turns for Christmas planning and lunch.



Lichfield Cathedral Remembrance display



On Remembrance parade with 'soldier tree'
Now looking forward to Christmas and into the new year with many more outings and get togethers.

I for one am so glad that a chance meeting at the NMA has led to me joining this great group. If anyone is ever wanting to visit the NMA and needs someone to go with give us a shout through our Chair Pat or secretary Marie, contacts listed under Wales and West, they will share with us as there is usually one of us that would love any excuse for a visit.
Cheers



At NMA with ATS & WRAC statues



At NAAFI memorial, NMA

Worcester

Christmas party time!



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

Greater London

Chrissie Mills

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Congratulations to Connie Evans on her 100th birthday – the branch joined her at The Phoenix pub, Chelsea, to help celebrate.





Worthing

Greta Carlisle

Once again, our group assembled after a long absence. We have been unable to meet at the usual venue due to it being used for COVID 19 vaccination purposes. Fortunately, we found temporary accommodation at the Methodist Church Hall. We said goodbye to Rebecca, off to Norfolk, and Jackie to Warwickshire, although she will continue to be Chairperson as she plans to visit as often as she can. She also runs our branch Facebook page.

Our Christmas lunch was at the Windsor Hotel and 17 members sat down to a wonderful spread, followed by a raffle with great prizes. As we left all were given large goodie-filled Santa sacks to enjoy at home.



Windsor hotel, before everyone arrived



Doreen Bray, Greta Carlisle & Edna Bye



Eddie Sinclair



Janet McKechnie



Debbie Kennard, Joan Pearson, Maureen Horwood & Doreen Bray



Rebecca Bailey, Heather Digweed, Jackie Bentley & Caz Hill

As we don't have a meeting in December, several birthdays will be celebrated after the January get together.



Area Co-ordinator: Lyn Hatch

Email: eastern.area@wraca.org.uk

With most of the restrictions lifted, September saw my first visit to meet the members of the Herts, Beds and Bucks Branch for lunch in Duxford, also joined by two members of the Cambridge Branch. It was lovely to meet everyone especially Diane Lidstone, who kept me entertained with stories about her service as a cook in the ATS during WW2.



Back row L - R: Wendy Hooton, Kathleen Kyne, Mary Blake, Chris Buxton-Barrett, Catherine Lidstone, Josephine P Teague. Front row L - R; Jean

For the first time this December, The Not Forgotten Association brought their entertaining Jingle Bell Rock to Norfolk. What a great afternoon it was, even though due to the weather it had to finish 30 minutes before the end of the planned show, the brave entertainers battled the wind and rain but were beaten by the bad

conditions. Fancy dress optional, Kerry and myself entered into the Christmas spirit, welcomed with a glass of mulled wine, the games commenced. Christmas songs and tracks from the Greatest Showman were belting out of the in-car speakers. Hog roast served for lunch, followed by tea or coffee and a mince pie, followed by more games and a raffle.



A few days later I joined my own branch (Norfolk) for Christmas lunch, our first gathering for some time.

I look forward to joining Colchester Branch next year when they restart their meetings.

Cambridge

Contact: Jean Farrington
Tel: 01223 503867;
Email – jeanfarrington62@gmail.com;
Facebook – Cambridge Branch WRAC Association

Chelmsford

Contact: Georgina Shadrack
Tel: 01245 251088

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

Sadly, due to the uncertainty surrounding the Covid pandemic we have been unable to arrange a branch meeting. However, there is some good news on the horizon as tentative plans are being formed to commence our monthly get together from March. This will, of course, be dependent on restrictions at the time. I for one, can't wait to see everyone again.



WRAC members at Colchester Veterans Breakfast Club

A few branch members have been regular attendees at the Colchester Armed Forces and Veterans Breakfast Club, which is organised by our very own Kerry Warnes. Numbers have been steadily growing and it is so good to meet up over a delicious breakfast. We are due to have our Christmas Lunch and Raffle on 15th December.



J Smith & H Savin collecting for RBL Poppy Appeal

It has been a successful Poppy Appeal this year, especially as things were not brought to an abrupt halt like last year. Branch members Jenni Pizzuto, Jackie Smith and myself were able to free up some time to help. Jenni produced some beautiful knitted poppies that were snatched up almost as soon as they were put on display. Once again, the response from the people of Colchester was amazing.

Herts, Bucks & Beds

Wendy Hooton

We've been fortunate enough to meet up a couple of times this year. Mary "Rusty" Blake and myself organised a lunch at The Plough in Duxford in September. Nine of us were able to attend and a fabulous time was had by all judging by the amount of chatting that went on! It was lovely that our Area Coordinator Lyn Hatch was able to join us too. It was a beautiful day so we were able to have a photograph taken outside in the garden.



More recently 14 of us had a Christmas lunch at The Brache in Luton which was organised by Christine Hayman. The Christmas spirit was in abundance with some wonderful Christmas jumpers being worn. Again, there was lots of chatting and laughing and we also enjoyed a delicious festive menu.



All too soon it was time to leave but not without a thought for our next lunch which will be at the end of February. Julie Ayre "volunteered" to organise it and will post details on the Herts/Beds/Bucks Facebook group.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Norfolk

Lyn Hatch

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The summer months have seen our zoom meetings reduced to the first Wednesday of the month, with the odd quiz night but mostly the opportunity to catch up and chat. With some restrictions still in place until July, weather permitting small groups organised short walks followed by coffee and the occasional lunch at Blickling Hall. In July four of us meet at the Duxford Imperial War Museum, lucky to catch some of the first flying displays of the season.



Carol Larkins, Wendy Hooton, Lyn Hatch and Chris Buxton – Bennett

November 5th Lorna Lansdown celebrated her 100th birthday with a party attended by her family and friends. A wonderful afternoon, music from the 40's softly playing in the background and the tables beautifully set for afternoon tea. Lorna had been one of the many women who eighty years ago who had been conscripted into the ATS.



Lyn Hatch and Lorna Lansdown



Lorna Lansdown

Saturday 11th December we gathered at the Recruiting Sergeant for our Christmas lunch. We welcomed two new members, the best Christmas hat was won by Pepi Simpsons with Leslie Scott coming a close second. We were so busy catching up, before we knew it we were on the way home.



Carol Larkins, Wendy Hooton, Lyn Hatch and Chris Buxton – Bennett

Interest Groups

CycleFest

Contact: Liz King
Liz@trispiritevents.com

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

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Thank you one and all for your contributions – they make great reading, and it is wonderful to see you all so active, busy and living up to Comradeship and Esprit de Corps.

Please continue to send in your branch news, reports and updates. 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. Please remember, send all your photos separate to your report text (preferably as attachments to the report email), in the highest possible resolution. This makes it easier to reproduce the photos – and we are all aware that a 'picture paints a thousand words'.
Editor

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".



LIFE AFTER THE WRAC (Gloucester branch)

Claire Moore



I often get asked if the skills learnt from my Army career transferred to civilian life. I was fortunate to do a resettlement course on leaving and passed the exam that allowed me to apply to Gloucestershire Constabulary. As they were not recruiting at the time, I used my skills as a data telegraphist and clerk in the Royal Signals to get a position in Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service in their Control Room. After a short time, a place

became available at the regional Police Training School. The training was made so much easier as the skill set learnt after being a Junior Leader and having 6 months training at Guildford meant I could concentrate on the studying and not have to worry about the drill, discipline and bullying of shoes etc. At the age of 28, I became 'Big Sister' and unofficial mentor to the girls in the block, most of whom were only 19. Think they had a shock to find out what was involved with the training; up at 6am for a 10 mile run, drill and kit. Studying the law was hard enough. My knowledge and help was gratefully received and rewarded with drinks at the bar: a cross I had to bear. On passing out I was posted to Gloucester.

I met my husband (also a Police Officer) and we both have the same sense of humour and outlook on life. Mind you the first time he complained that I put tram lines in his shirt sleeves, he ended up doing his own ironing and, to be fair, still does. My Shift Sergeants soon realised I didn't stand any nonsense and I just wanted to get on with the job, and I got the nickname of 'Little Sergeant'. It was strange going from acting Staff Sergeant in the WRAC to being on the bottom rung again!

I recently asked my youngest daughter if she felt we had been strict with them and had too many rules etc. She just thought growing up, all families were like ours: having the shiniest shoes and smartest school uniform and that my compulsion for being early rather than late for things was normal (no drill or early morning runs were involved, ha, ha). To be fair they did enjoy the game of room inspections and bed making. I think the skills learnt at the tender age of 16 will certainly stay with me for ever. I am so grateful to have been given such a fabulous start to my adult life and proud to have served.

Frances Fairclough



After having to leave the Army due to expecting our eldest daughter, my husband was posted to Germany, and we ended up spending 8 years there. Not long after moving from Viersen to Dulmen my husband went on tour to Canada for 11 months. Whilst he was away, I joined the Wives Club and enjoyed playing Netball for their team. I also took part in a 2.2 shooting competition against German Army wives and had my

picture in the local Dulmen newspaper for coming first in our ladies' team. I became an Avon Representative and helped the Area Rep to chat to other British wives as she didn't speak much English and although my German wasn't brilliant, I understood quite a bit so could translate for her.

When we came back to the UK in the early '80s, I started to help as Classroom Assistant doing baking twice a week and helping with reading. My husband came out of the Army in 1984 and we moved to Gloucestershire where, once the children were old enough, I started working as a Housekeeper in a private house in the village where we live. I worked there for 29 years and watched the children grow up to have children of their own. I became a Brownie and Rainbow leader with Girl Guiding UK and enjoyed 27 years gaining my Brownie Holiday Licence to take the girls away on residential holidays as well as my Catering Certificate to cook for the Guide's at Camp. My Army Stores Training came in very handy. I was also Mentor for new Leaders, DBS Verifier, and was District Commissioner for 8 years. I gained more just being with the girls and enjoying many new adventures. Abseiling down Cheddar Gorge; zip wiring, archery and go karting to name a few. I think the things I learnt in the Army helped me to take myself out of my comfort zone and try lots of things that I would never have dreamt of.

Sheila Lloyd-Graham



I reluctantly left the WRAC to join my husband in Berlin as a posting couldn't be made for me. I travelled over to the US Sector Employment Office in Berlin and was immediately offered a job in their Andrews Olympic Pool and then progressed to the Sports Office staying 12 Years! The US

Army didn't have a PT School, so I was in luck. My 'hubby' also worked as Chief of Photography at a later stage.

Teaching Tennis Skills to the US Army in West Berlin, 1977-1989

Ann Stack

As the eldest child of four from a very busy home, joining The WRAC honed the skills I had and taught me routine and order which have stayed with me to this day. I left The WRAC on 'Family Grounds' (pregnancy) and initially found the transition to 'Army Wife' strange and difficult as I missed being a Soldier. I was 'Wife of' and a dependant which, for this very independent soul, took some getting used to! However, onwards and upwards and so began the next chapter of my life.



We moved every year to eighteen months around West Germany, as it was then called, and decamped to the UK for four years, before a final posting to Hong Kong, which was the icing on cake. Organising, packing, un-packing, making friends and exploring new areas were both daunting and very

exciting. One of the biggest challenges was having my lovely baby, aged just 6 weeks, to compliment my 3 and 4 year old alongside moving into a new Quarter (which was in the process of being refurbished), sorting and handing over the Old Quarter, unpacking and making a home solo with my extended family hundreds of miles away and a husband in Belize for 7 months. Sound familiar?

Like many others, I just got on with it and I never, ever thought I couldn't deal with whatever was thrown at me. To this day, I firmly believe there is always a solution, and this is in large part due to the training we received in the Army. We most definitely had transferrable skills although I don't think we always recognise them as we think they are the 'norm'. Over the course of our frequent moves I've worked as a Specialist Teaching Assistant, become a Barn Owl in The Brownies when the Pack was under threat of closure, been involved in and supported Clubs my children belonged to, have organised and taken part in fundraising events for various charities including The Moonwalk and Sun Walk, volunteered for Barnardo's as a Young Person's Advocate and my proudest achievement was setting up a Pastoral Unit in a Primary School and leading on safeguarding. Why? Because there was a huge need and it needed doing. The WRAC instilled initiative, tenacity, adaptability, a lot of fun, adventure, determination and a 'can do' attitude which have served me well and for which I am very thankful.

GREENSLEEVES



Last year I was asked to write an obituary on behalf of a friend for two ex-WRAC Staff Band colleagues who had died within a few months of each other. After reading the notice, which appeared in *Lioness*, the same friend asked if I would write her obituary when the time came. I promised I would do so. Thinking about her request, I reflected upon the fact that the deepest feelings held by one person for another are often not

revealed until after the one admired has died and it is too late for that person to know how highly they were valued. The regret of not disclosing the warmth of affection felt can last a lifetime; I write from experience. Having learnt from the past, I hope not to make such a mistake again; therefore, I celebrate here the life to date of that same dear friend: Janet Cox (nee Skellon).



Janet was born in Manchester in May 1932, and seventeen years later travelled south to Guildford to embark upon the role of musician in the recently founded Women's Royal Army Corps Staff Band. As a fledgling cornet player and the youngest in the band, Janet lacked the experience, both musical and otherwise, of many of her colleagues: to mention but a few, the drum major had been a member of the Dagenham Girl Pipers; an outstanding clarinettist had received formal training at a conservatoire; and one of Janet's brass-section allies had previously served in the Women's Land Army and in the ATS. Nevertheless, Janet quickly endeared herself to her comrades, a number of whom became lifelong friends.

Sometime later, Janet also endeared herself to a young National Serviceman, whose name revealed the day of his birth: Valentine. At the end of a social evening held for army personnel, the second lieutenant vied with and prevailed over a fellow officer to escort Janet back to the coach upon which she had arrived - the romance that followed had begun with the flip of a coin! Janet and Val were married in February 1954. Having left the Forces for civilian life shortly before their marriage, the same sense of adventure that had accompanied their military lives now shaped their future: a home in the Metropolis saw Val exchange khaki for the blue-black of a police officer, whilst Janet created a home for their daughter.

Their middle years found Val in retail management and Janet the proprietress of a successful shoe shop, and subsequently of a seafront hotel. Cooking for up to thirty guests, Janet's recipe for lemon chicken was praised - and has, I can confirm, stood the test of time - and her melon boats, she tells, were something to behold, although their delicacy, she adds gaily, was not always appreciated by the occasional burly businessman visitor whose only want was chunky traditional British fare!



Alongside their working lives, holidays at home and abroad created a wealth of memories, and hobbies were begun and sustained. Shared passions included and remain golf and art; of the latter, Val sketches whilst Janet prefers to create in watercolours, often sending her paintings as mounted pictures and personalized greetings cards to family and friends - they are more cherished than she realizes.

The death of a young granddaughter from an incurable illness brought great sadness, but a grandson and later a great-grandson brought and continue to bring joy.

In her retirement Janet added volunteer hospital worker to her activities, along with offering her services as a telephone 'buddy' for Age UK, which she pursues to this day. Giving of her time has long been a way of life, as has the giving of goods: books are taken to charity shops (both Janet and Val are avid readers); bags of carrots are taken to The Donkey Sanctuary; and old linen is taken to Monkey World - apparently, the residents like to wrap curtains, sheets and such things round themselves!

And throughout all Janet has maintained her love of music, playing for the local brass band of the area in which she was currently living. But the years having slowed her pace from the lively step of The Lass of Richmond Hill to the stately stride of Greensleeves, Janet finally closed the lid of her instrument case three years ago - although closed, it is not locked!

Having endured a major operation in the past and since lived with its consequences, Janet is under no illusion as to her mortality. Her greatest legacy will be the example she has set, which includes a sparkling sense of humour. Early last year, two junior doctors assisting a hospital consultant received from Janet a lesson, which no medical treatise could ever provide, on the bright spirit and wicked wit that can exist despite great depth of age: before submitting to minor surgery, Janet quipped that she hoped the wearing of a red bikini would be possible after recovery!

A few weeks short of her 89th birthday, Janet, as a concession to her years, reluctantly relinquished her ageing sports car - replacing it with a racy Mini Cooper! And now, as her 90th birthday approaches, she is planning further adventures: reorganizing the garden; spending time with family and friends; booking holidays - and reading Lioness from 'cover to cover'. "Have you received your copy of Lioness?" she enquires of me twice every year, and upon gaining a positive reply we discuss any articles that mention the band in which she, my mother and I all served.

So, if you should see a trendy old lady driving an equally trendy white Mini along Weymouth seafront, with a smile on her lips and the joy of life in her eyes, stop and stare - it will be Janet, the like of whom you may rarely see again.

Julie Collinson (nee Hitchcock)

(Janet has been a staunch supporter of the WRAC for over 70 years, and is one of the 100 wonderful women honoured in a book of the same title published in 2019 by the WRAC Association.)

MEMORIES FROM MRS N KINSON (nee Ransome)

My first posting was 10 R.C.B Fernhurst Camp, Haslemere, Surrey, in November 1948, when I joined the ATS. I was a waitress and worked in the Officers Mess waiting on Major Rwet Drake and Controller Railton. It was Regular Commissions for Officers training; these were officers that were on the Board. The Camp disbanded after exactly one year; ATS changed to the W.R.A.C. 1949 and I was posted to Dreghorn Camp, Edinburgh - the 1st Bn Royal Scots, a training camp.

I was sent in April 1950 to St Omer Barracks, Aldershot, on a silver service course, to wait on Princess Mary, the then Princess Royal, The Countess of Harewood, at the Carlton Hotel Bridge St, Edinburgh, at a dinner. She was in WRAC uniform, as she was Director of the WRAC. The Princess spoke to all the waitress' present at the dinner and asked me where I came from, which was Redcar, Yorkshire. I don't remember any photos being taken at the time. I was demobbed several weeks later in June 1950.

I re-enlisted in February 1951 and was posted straight to Military College of Science, Becket Hall, at Shrivenham, Swindon, Wiltshire. I was a L/Cpl (W/352221) and in charge of eight waitress' - there were two shifts, a corporal was in charge of the other shift. I went to Hindhead, Surrey, on an N.C.O. course, where I met my husband and we married in April 1952.

I can say they were the happiest days of my life and have some fond memories of these lovely people. I'll be 91 years old on 26th December this year.

Norma Kinson

STIRRING THE CHRISTMAS PUDDING

Sylvia Stubbs shared this picture, which brought back lots of happy memories. A tradition for us at Huron Camp was the Stirring of the Christmas Pudding. A photographer from the MoD came to record the event and sent the story and picture to all the papers local to all of us in the photograph. Imagine my Mum opening the paper and seeing me in there. She was proud as punch. It's a wonder she didn't put it in the window.



Sylvia is still in contact with Pat Cox (now Williams) - Sylvia was a cook and Pat was Rations Clerk. Sylvia is 3rd from the right; Pat is 5th right back row. Hopefully the other girls will recognise themselves. Happy Days.

Sylvia Stubbs

2022 # Lioness edition

30th anniversary disbandment of WRAC / integration into British Army. Let us know:

- Where you were on 6th April 1992?
- What you were doing on 6th April 1992?
- Which Corps / Regiment / etc were you to re-badged to?
- Any other memories of that time?

Copy Deadline: 1st June 2022 (by email to editor@wraca.org.uk)

Reunions & Dinners

We have received the following for all those that were stationed at 16 Signal Regiment in Germany 1960 – 69:

25 Years and Counting - New Members Welcome

Were you or your partner at 16 Signal Regiment anytime from 1960 until 1969?

We are looking for you!!

Come and join our social club, which has a reunion weekend every October in different locations around the UK.

Meet up with friends at the Gala Dinner with entertainment and dancing

Enjoy a theme night with fancy dress, or not, the choice is yours

You are guaranteed laughter all weekend long!

Check our website to see previous reunions.

If you are interested in joining us, an application form is available on the site:

the-60s-16ers.com



WRAC & RMAS Sisterhood Officers' Dinner 20 November 2021

After the inevitable Covid cancellation in 2020 just under 100 guests enjoyed the 2021 WRAC & RMAS Sisterhood Officers' Dinner at the Victory Services Club on Saturday 20th November. As in 2019 there were a fair number of new attendees which was great to see, we look forward to welcoming them again in 2022! Brigadier Viv Buck, Provost Marshal (Army) attended as our guest and gave a short speech. As in 2019 music was provided by a saxophone quartet from the Army Medical Services Band, including former WRAC Staff Band member Dawn Wragg.

The next dinner will be held on Saturday 19th November 2022 at the Victory Services Club. Contact: wracofficersdc@gmail.com

Sue Hatton & Ish Thomson



WRAC DINNER CLUB – Nottingham 2021

My first attempt was aborted due to my ill health, 2nd was Covid, so it was going to be 3rd time lucky. Well as one of the many Dinner Club Virgins (DCV) it was with nervous anticipation I started my journey to Nottingham from Salisbury. I was dressed in green, but without tights, tunic and pointed cap Robin Hood-est style, and I imagine getting my long-bow on the train could have been a problem! I hoped that there wouldn't be a mean Sheriff awaiting me but rather a warm Maid Marion welcome!

Arrived at St Pancras, heard the calling of the Champagne Bar a lady approached me and pointed at my chest (the previous weekend's purchase of two new Prima Donna bras hadn't failed in their support role) but it was the WRAC badge on my jumper that immediately opened up a conversation. Stress levels lowered but excitement was higher.... So, we started in a positive way - Margaret Narroway (my new best friend) strolled upstairs to the Champagne bar to start our weekend! The conversation started with "Oh you're a DCV (Dinner Club Virgin) cheers and a cheeky grin" – what was going to be in store for me?! We parted company to catch up later in Nottingham due to transport.

Arriving alone is a tad daunting but fear not, a warm welcome to the Dinner Club family awaits - we are all Sisters in Arms and it's so good to see welcoming faces! That welcome buzz and sound of excitement and anticipation of some 200 plus women and that "Oh you're a DCV cheers" and a cheeky grin.

It's the energy, warmth and enthusiasm that welcomes you which puts you at ease thanks to the amazing team, as well as faces that we recognise from previous events or Facebook. More introductions and "Oh you're a DCV).... The Committee is outstanding, and the organisation is fabulous – never have I so easily and enthusiastically handed over money to such a good cause, but all with the grace and goodness that you would expect from a top salesperson! So, armed with raffle tickets, tombola, programme of events and new polo shirt – can you ever have too many WRAC Polo shirts I wonder?? Now the weekend has really begun....

There is an ideal balance of time to catch up, chatter, hug, and laugh. Pockets of ladies can be seen with smiles of pride and passion of being able to catch up after the delay of two years. There was such a great positive buzz in the air – just what we all needed. I found two

of my lovely Salisbury ladies – Jackie and Linda Clark – who had encouraged me to come along and had promised to "supervise me" on their table. Still introduced as Dinner Club Virgin, what was planned for me and the others? Should I have prepared a ditty, joke or routine or reverted to the plan of a Robin Hood routine..... More of that later.

So Saturday night started in the bar with various outstanding outfits on display but the glow of anticipation and excitement outshone even the best sparkles. Called to dinner and exited, this DCV looked nervously around at other DCV's as we all entered the room together with anticipation at fever pitch - already clapping, singing and the promise of even more fun and laughter and definitely dancing, lots of dancing.

This was it, a DCV at the ready wondering should I have taken up tap dancing as a youngster or maybe baton twirling at senior school? I have to say initiation was less painful than I thought, and we still left with a smile on our face. Band was amazing, DJ started with very good tunes made better by our serenading. Alas, I missed Julie White who got up and shared her amazing vocals, much to everyone's delight. That song - has there ever been a better rendition of Simply The Best?

You might arrive alone or in a group, but you will leave smiling, refreshed with love and laughter from a unique band of Sisters in Arms. The years might move on but the comradeship is still there and the bond that holds us together ensures that everyone has a good time.

Well what can I say - it was emotional and if you are wondering what is in store for you as a newbie or DCV next year YOU can find out Keep an eye out and come and join us! I believe its 2nd weekend October 2022.

Amanda M Foster





O.A.T.S & WONDERFUL WOMEN



STAFF SERGEANT KATHLEEN KERRIDGE (nee TOWNSEND) (W116029) D.O.B. 9th January 1920 (age 101)



Prior to joining the ATS, Kathleen was working for the Emergency Medical Service at Epsom (Sep 1939 – Jan 1942) in a reserve job, so was not conscripted to the ATS. The job had become routine, and she wanted a change, but the only opportunity available was to join up. So, Kathleen volunteered to join the ATS in January 1942. She trained at Fulford Barracks in York and was then posted to the Experimental Establishment in Shoeburyness, near Southend-on-Sea.

The work involved the testing of ammunition and weapons, some of which were in regular use, but others were new and highly secret. Kathleen was involved in determining the velocities of weapons. A fair knowledge of mathematics was necessary to correlate the data obtained, and in those days, slide rules and primitive calculating

machines were the only aids. Shoeburyness was the only station where ATS were employed to do this work and consequently Kathleen spent the majority of her war service in one place.

At first the pay was the lowest possible, ten shillings per week, although the Brigadier, who was very proud of his ATS, did get them some “danger money” to supplement their pay (2d per day). The working ATS uniform consisted of navy-blue skirts, white blouses, red and blue forage caps and navy pea jackets. The food was very good and they had a superb cook who fed them very well – there were no food shortages unlike the situation faced by their families.

At the end of the war Kathleen was demobbed, in 1946. She was asked to take on a commission and stay in the ATS but declined and returned to London, where she resumed secretarial posts at 3 pharmaceutical companies.

Jan Calvert
Kathleen's daughter

[Jan adds that – Kathleen can't see to read the Lioness magazine any more but Jan flips through it and looks for anything which may be of interest to her].

Remembrance(s)



LINCOLN & DISTRICT

We laid our Wreath in Mablethorpe and felt very privileged to represent the WRAC on such a special occasion. The town turned out and over 60 wreaths were laid remembering all those who gave their lives for us.

Sylvia Stubbs & Marion King



WRAC wreath laid in Mablethorpe

SALISBURY REMEMBRANCE PARADE

I have always attended Remembrance Parades for as long as I can remember. Since leaving the services, I have felt very proud to stand along the civilian community wearing my medals whilst blending into the background. I joined the WRAC Salisbury branch after the Armed Forces weekend in June 2019 after meeting the Lionesses and chatting to a few of the ladies. So, I had a feeling that Remembrance days would possibly change for me. The branch decided that 20 years was long enough with no female presence, so it was time to "Get on Parade" in 2021 and have some ex-service ladies show Salisbury what we do and the fact that we are still here!

At first, I was adamant that I would not be marching as I thought it may have been a bit embarrassing in my own hometown, but after spending the day before the Remembrance Sunday with my good friend Jayne Green, also ex Lioness, and her persuading me to partake as she was I decided that night I would.

Jayne and I walked to the meeting point on Sunday, the 14th of November 2021 to meet the ladies and we weren't really sure how many would actually be there, who would turn up, how to be dressed, how would we be received; these and many questions were about to be answered as we turned the corner. We were more than pleasantly surprised to find some 14 ladies chattering eagerly and ready to be the first female contingent in Salisbury for some 20 years. Some had their berets, all wearing their medals proudly and all standing tall ... and we also had a Standard bearer! Thanks must go to Sally Elizabeth Willoughby who stepped up to the mark and did us proud on the day.



We lined up in our small but perfectly formed squad, and I think we were all privately surprised how those hours on the parade square came back to us. We proudly marched behind the male veterans and as we turned the corner into Castle Street, which was lined with civilians clapping the parade, I must admit I felt an overwhelming emotion and a great sense of pride. The parade was fantastic. The sun shone and the whole of Salisbury was there to see as Amanda Foster laid the wreath, and then we all marched back through the city centre to Saint Thomas's church. Again, civilians and some of the military in the crowd were all clapping the Parade as we marched past. I am so pleased that I took part and that Jayne persuaded me. I am now looking forward to next year. Maybe will have more numbers and one thing is for certain I will be wearing not only my medals but also my beret with Pride.

Elizabeth Abbott-Myerscough

Served Nov 83- Nov 05

WOMEN MARCH AT SWINDON CENOTAPH FOR THE FIRST TIME

BBC Points West and BBC Wiltshire, along with Greatest Hits Radio (Swindon), covered the Swindon Branch of WRACA marching at Swindon Cenotaph on 14th November for the first time.

Tina Baker was interviewed for their Remembrance Sunday coverage, which was the top story on the bulletin. She spoke about what Remembrance Day means to her personally.

Of the interview Tina said: "It was an amazing experience and very emotional. I mentioned quite a lot about the WRAC Association, but it wasn't shown. I also recruited a new lady today to our branch, who's just moved to Swindon with her husband and was on parade."



In an interview about the Buddy Buddy scheme Rose Kilpatrick also highlighted that the branch had only relaunched in June 2021 and was so pleased to be included in the Remembrance Sunday parade for the first time. Sadly they have no Standard, nor Bearer, but still they proudly represented themselves, the branch, the Association, all those they served alongside and those who served in the past or serve still.

WRAC REMEMBRANCE CYCLE RIDE 2021

This time last year we were in the middle of a Pandemic and our amazing Wendy Hooton came up with this fantastic idea of cycling around our local cenotaphs as Armistice day was cancelled. We raised an brilliant amount of money for our the WRAC & RBL Charities.

This year we are all getting back to some kind of normality. Out of the blue Wendy Hooton called and asked me to step up to lead the WRAC Remembrance challenge this year, as she would be away on a well-deserved holiday. I was very honoured to be asked and immediately said yes.

So, to get this challenge going we needed to set up a Facebook message page to gather our Lionesses once again. It was not long before these amazing ladies came forward. The dates were set over the Poppy Appeal period 28th October 2021 to 14th November 2021, and donations would be for the WRAC Association only this year.

The Challenge was for individuals to ride around their local cenotaphs, take pictures in their WRAC cycle shirts, and post pictures to the WRAC Cycle Facebook group. Well, our Lionesses' did not disappoint us as you can see from these amazing pictures.

Wendy Hooton and colleague Jenny Thomas, could not find any Cenotaphs at Goto Lake in Bonaire in the Dutch Caribbean, whilst on their holiday. Phil Mattinson & Elaine Smith visited local villages in Coventry. Pat Rosewell (Budgie) managed to cycle around Ashford, Maddy Walker & Sonja in Northwich. Liz King was in Mallorca and saw many Churches - have you seen the miles this lady cycles. Bev Fenning was visiting the Souda War Cemetery in Crete, which was too far to cycle to but she promised to cycle around Crete a few days later.

Myself, Karen Baxter & Leona Goffin met in Rotherham and did our cycle ride to the Cathedral in the city of Sheffield, via the Minster in Rotherham Town Centre and back to mine. When we

arrived at Sheffield we googled War Memorials and discovered that there were two not far from the Cathedral. Many other Lionesses joined in this challenge, too many to mention all.

I would like to say many thanks to all that participated in the WRAC Remembrance Cycle Ride 2021 and look forward to the next one. The grand total for the donations received are £505.

Cheryl Jones



Cheryl Jones, Karen Baxter & Leona Goffin



Bev Flemming in Crete



Cheryl Jones, Karen Baxter & Leona Goffin



Pat Rosewell



Elaine Smith



Phil Matinson



Rowena Naile





Sonja



Wendy Hooton



Maddie Walker

REMEMBRANCE – Street collection

Bury St Edmunds was fairly quiet for our Street Collection on Wednesday 27th October. However, the 3 of us managed to collect £150 for the WRAC Association. We stayed from 9am - 1pm.

Wendy Hooton

REMEMBRANCE – at the NMA

During the weekend of 13/14 November four of us from Southampton branch were able to take a coach trip to the National Memorial Arboretum for the Remembrance weekend. The hotel was excellent, the food and our rooms were very good. On Sunday we were taken to the NMA into the new (Aspects) building which was converted to a large dining room of round tables, where we first had coffee, followed by the actual service, which we saw on large TV screens.

However, prior to lunch being served we were interrupted by a couple. The lady asked Babs if she was in Northern Ireland during October 1983/4? Babs Bowers, a Sgt Major in the Red Caps? When Babs confirmed, the enquirer's husband, a former Cpl in the Queens Own Highlanders, was delighted and remembered her from their time; all serving in their own units.

POPPY APPEAL ORGANIZER (PAO) Rotherham East

This is my second year as PAO for Rotherham East, my first year was during a Pandemic which was incredibly hard. As everyone was at home the schools were reluctant to let us in. The pubs were waitress service only so we were not allowed to leave our tins there. Despite all of that we did manage to raise just over £20,000 for my area.

The Poppy Appeal started in June with the receipt of the PAO handbook, which is a guide on all you need to know about being an organizer. The school packs for the primary schools arrived and all needed to be contacted to arrange the distribution before half term. We have a website portal where all stock needs to be ordered including the Wreaths for the local organizations, community groups and local councils. One essential thing you need for the Poppy Appeal is an army of volunteers. This year the volunteers did not let me down - I even had the pleasure of two Lionesses, Karen Baxter & Leona Goffin, to give me a hand.

Once the stock arrives it's time to call on the volunteers to help put all the boxes of poppies together and make up the collection tins with the required information. These then need to be distributed to all the local shops & businesses.

On the 28th October in Rotherham East the Poppy Appeal was launched in the Rotherham Market Cascade, by the Mayor & Mayoress of Rotherham, Councillors Jenny Andrews & Jeanette Mallinder. Ron Moffett MBE & I were awarded a bottle of champagne from the Royal British Legion representative Karen as a thank you for the fundraising work we do on behalf of the RBL.

I managed to secure three Poppy Appeal Stalls at the local supermarkets (Morrisons, Tesco & Asda) this year. These had to be manned by volunteers, who comprise of ex-military & civilians. It was amazing to see; the enthusiasm they showed at these stalls. The stories that you hear from the donors of all ages is quite overwhelming, family associated to Veterans, amputees & veterans from recent conflicts and the generosity of those who want to donate to the RBL.

The Appeal ended on the 14th November, then the counting begins. All the poppies and collection tins were collected in from the local shops, business' and schools, the money

counted and banked. Fortunately, the supermarkets count their donations in store. This year I am proud to say that Rotherham East raised over £40,000 during the Poppy Appeal. Thank you to all the volunteers that helped raise vital funds for our Veterans in this campaign. Without you it would not happen. Cheryl Jones Poppy Appeal Organiser Rotherham East



Leona Goffin, Karen Baxter & Cheryl Jones, Rotherham Tesco's



Ron Moffet & Julie Graysohn (ex WRAC)



Cheryl Jones, Karen Baxter & Leona Goffin, Rotherham market



Rotherham Market Cascade

In May 2021 I was elected as a Parish Councillor in my local village Brinsworth in Rotherham, South Yorkshire. I decided to stand for election because our village Parish Council had not been contested for over 30 years; so most of the councillors had been co-opted. We had seven new members on the team and all were elected. At our first meeting the first agenda item was to elect the Chairman, and Vice Chairman – this is the first time that both posts are women in our village.



Cheryl Jones, Rotherham hospital



Therefore, I was honored this year to wear the Parish Chains of Office, along with my WRAC beret, to the Remembrance Armistice Day event on 14th November. Cheryl Jones

THE VETERANS CHARITY 'ROUTES OF REMEMBRANCE'

I just wanted to let you all know of an event I had the pleasure of taking part in for armistice weekend. I saw a post on one of the facebook military groups talking about "routes of remembrance", and so I asked some questions about and was told that it was the veterans charity who organised it and to contact them.

In doing so I was then emailing direct with the coordinator. He told me it was to be a very early start from Edinburgh Waverley on 11th November, leaving on the 05.48 train to King's Cross. There were three female representatives who got on in Edinburgh, two from the Army (myself and someone from 205 field ambulance) and one from the Navy. We picked up other veterans along the route from Berwick, Newcastle, Darlington, Doncaster and York. You can imagine the banter was well underway on reaching London.



Ready for the off at Edinburgh Waverley station

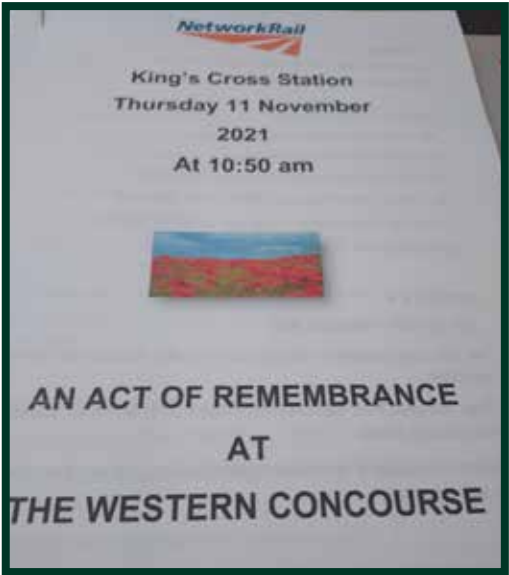
The Veterans Charity supplied me with a wreath to lay after the small service at King's cross, on the western concourse. The train journey was first-class travel by LNER, and we were met off the train in London and escorted to the service area. We were all interviewed for LNER publicity, which was posted on their twitter feed.

There was a minor blip in that we had to have an unscheduled stop at Newark due to someone being taken ill on journey, thankfully it was not a veteran and the person appeared to rally somewhat when the paramedics met the train in Newark. This blip caused us to arrive 10mins late of schedule and meant a bit of a dash to the concourse, but it was all good and not really late on parade.

I would certainly do this next year as I'm unable to march at cenotaph. If anyone is interested or would like more information please email Senga sengam13@hotmail.co.uk, or phone 07876-782773.

Regards

Senga Palmer





Obituaries - Their Final Salute



MARY JOSEPHINE ('Paddy') BARKER 16th May 1922 - 18th April 2021



It is with great sadness that we report the sad loss of Paddy on 18 April 2021. Paddy's funeral was held at St Michael and All Angels on 30 April and attended by three of our branch members.

Paddy was a much-loved Mum, Grandma, Great Grandma and friend. She was born Mary Josephine O'Callaghan in Liverpool on 16 May 1922 - the eldest of four children. She was a diligent student, did well at school and went on to start nurse training. After war broke out, Paddy decided to join the Auxiliary Territorial Service - a decision that proved to be a formative one, impacting on much of the remainder of her life.

After basic training, Paddy was mainly based in London and served in mainland Europe. Following the war Paddy decided to stay in London. In the late 1940s she moved to Leeds where she met her beloved Fred. Paddy and Fred married in February 1952 and set up home in Armley, Leeds where they made life-long friends. Her son Tim was born

in 1954, followed by her daughter Kristin in 1957. In 1958, the family moved to Headingley, Leeds where Paddy and Fred lived out the rest of their lives.

Paddy returned to work in the late 1960s working for the Automobile Association but fed up with the commute to the centre of Leeds she changed jobs so that she was a brisk 10-minute walk from home.

Paddy was a big supporter of the WRAC Association and attended all meetings of the Leeds Branch, both formal and social outings. Paddy had a great sense of humour and quick wit and brightened up our get togethers. She was a close friend to many of our current and past members and will be greatly missed by all of us. Meetings and days out will definitely not be the same - RIP Paddy.

Jayne Maitland



ANNE CARTER (Nee Garrad), ATS 21st July 1924 - 22nd July 2021



Born in Maymyo, Burma (Margaret) Anne Carter was the eldest child of Marjory and the Reverend Charles Garrad. Anne was home schooled until she was eight, when she sailed to England to continue her education in

Bristol and later Wiltshire. On reaching her 18th birthday Anne fulfilled her ambition in April 1943 to follow her mother into the Auxiliary Territorial Service, her mother being the first ATS recruit.

A month after the completion of training Anne was on a Cardre Course, and later that year posted to North Highland District, Inverness, as a clerk to work at the Palace Hotel on the banks of the River Ness. Having been trained as a shorthand typist, she was soon put to work. In an article written for the Lioness Anne wrote that she had been "working for some high-ranking officers planning a major 'exercise', which had been no less than the overall planning for D Day."

In 1944 after volunteering for an overseas posting Anne boarded the SS Queen of Bermuda in Glasgow and after two weeks of zig-zagging across the Mediterranean to avoid German U-boats arrived in Naples harbour. Her destination a 1,200-room palace, the Palace of Caserta built by the Kings of Naples. Here with many other ATS, Anne provided the clerical support needed by the British Section of Allied Force Headquarters. All 200 ATS slept in one large ward of a requisitioned hospital close to the palace. The conditions not being the best saw an outbreak of hepatitis sweep through the wards, Anne spent her time convalescing at a home near Bari, on the Adriatic coast and once recovered returned for duty.

Identified as a potential officer candidate Anne was flown to Cairo and then onto Palestine where she was commissioned on 9th June 1945 and then posted back to Naples.

In September of that year, along with 30 others, Anne flew back to the UK for a month's leave in a converted bomb-rack of a Liberator. The women were recalled early, but due to family circumstances Anne stayed at home for the full month. Once back in Naples the devastating news was broken that the Liberator returning the other women to Naples had been lost in a storm over the Mediterranean, all her friends were presumed drowned.

Posted to the ATS Transit and Assembly Centre in Naples, Anne then moved with the unit to Milan, on to Monza, and finally to Warmbad, Villach, Austria where six months later she was promoted to T/Junior Commander (Captain). In her final posting Anne

handled the movement of members of all the women's services in and out of CMF, and the first relays of Quaker Service Teams attempting to liberate the Internment Camps and Control Commission Staff of the United Nations.

Captain Anne Garrad was awarded the 1939-45 Star, Italy Star and War Medal and at the age 21 returned to civilian life.

I never had the opportunity to meet Anne, I only ever spoke with her on the phone and sadly before I could go and visit, she passed away. What an amazing lady; she achieved so much in her short service life.

Lyn Hatch



**KATHLEEN COOK
(nee Blake)
20th September 1920 -
15th September 2021**



Kathleen passed away on 15th September 2021, just 5 days before her 101st birthday. Born 20th September 1920 Kathleen was the second child in a family of six children. She had a very happy childhood living in a farm cottage in Enfield, Middlesex. Although her parents did not work on the farm it was a big part of her life where she and her brothers helped with haymaking and various other farming tasks. They lived opposite Whitewebbs, a manor house of the gentry, and were on good terms with the groundsman and the owners so were allowed certain privileges, like a shortcut to school which was still a mile and half away, rain, sun or snow.

Kathleen was very shy growing up and this was reflected when she was conscripted in 1942. She requested to work in 'the stores', which was local, so

she wasn't far from home. However, after preliminary assessments, Kathleen was told she was 'too clever' for her choice and was enrolled in the ATS. Kathleen did her basic training at Trowbridge then went to the Isle Of Man for radio interceptor training. She had good memories of that time and made some lasting friendships.

After training Kathleen joined Black Watch at Beaumanor Hall, Loughborough. She referred to May Cottages where she was billeted as comfortable, and they were well looked after. Still very shy she went home at every opportunity. At home her older sister had married and moved out, her younger sister, Sheila, was in the WRENS, her brothers Dennis and Raymond were in the RAF and the youngest brother, too young to enlist, was in the Boys Brigade. It was a blessing all those serving came home safely.

Now that space was available Kathleen's parents encouraged Kathleen's brother Raymond, to bring home friends from the Australian RAF when they had leave. This is how Kathleen met her future husband Walter while he was serving in the UK.

Kathleen stayed at Beaumanor Hall as a radio interceptor until she was demobbed in 1945. She married Walter in December 1945 and followed him to Australia in 1946. Although welcomed by her Australian family Kathleen was homesick and when her mothers' health deteriorated in 1956 the family decided to return to England for two years. Kathleen did the six-week journey on a ship alone with her three children (age 1, 3 and 5) and Walter followed a few months later after completing commitments in Australia.

The two-year intention evaporated and the family settled in Enfield. Kathleen had kept in touch with a number of friends from the ATS, particularly Isobel Harper in Scotland and each visited the other often meeting up with other friends from their Beaumanor days. Kathleen became involved with the Ladies Section of the British Legion and spent many a cold hour selling poppies in the shopping centres. Kathleen's father had started a business many years previously and it had passed down the generations. It became her son's business and she worked in his hardware shop until the age of 80 when she also gave up riding her bike! Kathleen survived some serious health scares, particularly in her 80's, but came through strongly.

In 2020 Kathleen was 100 years old in the middle of a pandemic. Celebrations were restricted so Kathleen sat on her doorstep and family, friends and

neighbours gathered (socially distanced) in the street to see her blow out 100 candles, sing happy birthday and share cake and drinks. It was a beautiful day and often talked about by many who attended.

Kathleen loved the reunions including those at Bletchley Park and attended with her friend Jean Welby who she'd met at Beaumanor. Although Kathleen outlived many friends and all her siblings, it was lovely to see Jean at her funeral in September, which was held in the church where Kathleen was married.

So many people were unaware of Kathleen's service in the war as she didn't talk about it unless asked, which seems to be the way of many of her comrades of the time. Kathleen had become a popular local figure and will be missed by many.

Elaine Gibbs (Daughter)



**Mrs SUSAN ELSKNIS
(nee Tungate)
14th February 1955 -
19th November 2021**



W/443613 Pte Susan Ann Elsknis, 1972-1976, joined the Army in 1972 having been born on Valentine's day in Luton. After basic training in Guildford and training as a Storewomen she served in CAD Kineton, COD Donnington and Viersen in Germany.

Sue's father was about to sign up as a professional footballer when he contracted polio. This sadly stopped him playing football again. However, Sue followed in her father's footsteps and played football for Luton Ladies. She

went on to play in the Ladies football World Cup in 1970 and other major tournaments around the world. The Army didn't recognise this sport for women at the time and as a result Sue decided to leave the army to pursue her dreams. Sue was a big character, always up for a laugh. A good all-round sports woman playing hockey and squash at army level.

Sue eventually married, although widowed in May 1997. She had two daughters, Nicola and Emma, and 4 grandchildren. One of those is already in the army and another is about to enter. Sue had a big influence in saying what a wonderful opportunity they would have in their chosen career.

Sue went on to work at Vauxhall and then ran and owned her own business which she sold to change career again. She went on to join the Prison Service winning the trophy for best recruit on her course. She served at The Mount Prison in Bovingdon, Hertfordshire, a job she dearly loved.

Sadly, Sue needed knee replacements and unfortunately both operations went wrong. The nerves were nipped in both legs causing her permanent pain. Eventually she had to retire medically from the job she loved. This was an enormous blow to her. Sue's health was not always good, she was however determined to enjoy life as much as she could.

She loved her military family; at times it was this family that encouraged her to get out and do as much as possible. She loved the WRAC reunions in Benidorm, where she was named Sue Stick. She took part in several WRAC Lionesses 10k events, being pushed round in a wheelchair carrying a charity bucket. This made her feel a big part of the event. On the first lockdown Sue took part in the 10k at Bury St Edmunds - she actually walked this one, a great achievement for her. She did trip over a twig though and was given the name Twiggy....

Sue enjoyed going to Centre Parcs with members of the WRAC each year and she also took part in both WRAC Cycling Festivals in August. She will be sorely missed next year by Ali's group. She rode an electric trike and allowed no-one to pass her. It became a standard joke amongst us.

Sue sadly passed away peacefully whilst on holiday with friends in Barbados on the 19 November 2021. She will be sadly missed but remembered as a fighter to the end.

Jennie Thomas



JUNE KATHLEEN (Sue) GREEN (nee Gibbons) 18th February 1935 – 23rd November 2021

June Kathleen Green (Sue) was born in Battersea London on 18 February 1935. She was one of three children. She was an evacuee who went to live with her Irish grandparents during the war. Her first job was in Sainsburys.

She enlisted in the WRAC on 18th September 1952 and served as an ammunition stores person reaching the rank of Lance Corporal. She wanted to sign on again but met a man who had other ideas and they married in Shrewsbury Cathedral on 8th October 1955. Terence was an Ammunition technician soldier who went on to complete 23 years in the RAOC. They had three children and travelled all over the world together.

When he left the army, he became an instructor at the army school of ammunition in CAD Kinton. They lived in Banbury for about ten years then moved away when he joined a pyrotechnics firm, living in different parts of Britain and Canada. Although principally a housewife she had a number of part-time jobs in shops, as a lolly-pop lady, bus escort for disabled children and teaching.

Sue and Terence, after retiring, lived in Hull for some years but in 2009 moved back to Banbury in Oxfordshire. He passed away in 2016. Sue passed away peacefully on the 23rd November 2021 at Fairholmes nursing home in Bodicote Banbury.

The Mrs Green's son Paul asked SSAFA that they pass on his thanks to the WRAC Association for their generosity, support and kindness over the last few years.



PATRICIA (Pat) JACKSON Died 23rd July 2021

Pat served from 1963 to 1967 as a civilian clerk on the permanent staff at Chetwynd barracks, as well as being a member of the WRAC (TA) at the same barracks. She was a much loved sergeant within the TA and the girls at the Wirral Branch speak fondly of their memories of her at this time. Pat met her husband (Pete) through her service and their wedding reception was held in the Sergeants' Mess at the barracks.

Despite being bed bound for her last 4 years, the girls from the Wirral branch visited regularly and Pete told us that she was always touched by their visits.

The Wirral girls performed a guard of honour at the funeral and paraded the Standard. Pete thanked the girls for their support on the day and also noted that the WRAC had been a part of their lives for the past 58 years.

Despite her failing health, Pat Jackson remained a true lioness and was always on hand for a joke and a bit of mischief, she will be missed by all who knew and loved her. It really sounds like she was a character and one the branch will never forget.

Sharon Broderick MBE
Chair, Wirral Branch



CAROLE MURPHY 1961 - June 2021



An Army Sergeant who served in Northern Ireland at the height of The Troubles, and went on to be an accomplished florist and Chelsea Flower Show medallist.

Carole Murphy, who passed away in June 2021, was a Sergeant serving at British Army Headquarters in Lisburn, Northern Ireland during the late 1980s. Working as a military accountant, her posting coincided with an upsurge in sectarian and terrorist violence across the province. One of a handful of female Senior NCOs then attached to the Royal Army Pay Corps (RAPC) she provided payroll and administrative support to the Army Dog Unit, itself deployed in small detachments across Northern Ireland. She insisted that she visit the soldiers she supported at all forward locations - unarmed and in uniform green skirt - saying that most problems could quickly be sorted out face to face, rather than by phone or signal. She developed a strong bond with the dog handlers after they tested her sense of humour early on when she was "accidentally" locked in the kennels. This rapport was tried in adversity when Corporal Brian Hayes and his dog Ben were killed in Crossmaglen in May 1988. Dealing with

his colleagues and providing essential administrative support during the aftermath of such a tragedy took tact and sensitivity which she was given much credit for.

Carole was born in Chatham in 1961 the eldest of 4 daughters. Soldiering was in her DNA as her father had been injured as a Sapper in Korea, and whose wider family had served in both World Wars. The first in her family to pass the 11 plus, she studied at Fort Pitt Grammar School for Girls in Rochester - her daughter Lizzie followed her there nearly 20 years later. She excelled at maths, hockey and getting into trouble. Her mother would telephone local pubs to warn landlords she was underage. Her quick mind assimilated the skills to be an accomplished short-hand writer, but an Army career had always beckoned.

In 1979, aged 18, she took the train to Queen Elizabeth Barracks, Guildford, the home of the Women's Royal Army Corps (WRAC), and after successfully completing her basic training, was then posted to Worthy Down for trade training as a military accountant.

Opportunities for adventure and promotion for female soldiers were limited at the time. Most postings for them were UK based, and male RAPC peers tended to enjoy faster promotion for similar levels of experience. Carole made the best of the chances given to her and after a 3-year stint at the Command Pay Office, enjoyed postings at the Regimental Pay Office Brighton and then to the Royal Corps of Transport Depot Aldershot. Here the privilege of a single Lance Corporal's stripe afforded her the honour of guarding the Royal toilet during a visit by the Princess Royal, who insisted that Carole was given a chair to sit on, much to the chagrin of the Depot Regimental Sergeant Major.

Posting and promotion followed to 1st (British) Corps at Bielefeld, Germany (overseas at last) and then back to Aldershot as Independent Pay Sergeant supporting the Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps: she spoke of her time there with much fondness.

Having met Mick, her future husband, also based in Lisburn, she expected to follow him on posting to Hong Kong, however the Army had other ideas and pointed her to Glasgow. She resigned, and only the last-minute intervention of a general saw this decision reversed and Carole embarked on her final posting to the Army Support Element at Headquarters British Forces Hong Kong. Marriage followed and soon afterwards her first daughter Lesley was born. Carole was required then to resign, a decision she took some years to come to terms with, especially as the

rules changed 2 weeks after she was discharged. A year later her second daughter Lizzie was born.

In 1996 Mick left the Army and the family settled in Kent. A busy and devoted mum, Carole unearthed a talent for floristry, going on to become a Chelsea Flower Show medallist and accomplished floral designer, all the while supporting 2 active and talented daughters. She competed in international floristry competitions in Milan and Holland and developed an impressive portfolio of work.

A move to Nottingham in 2004 saw her opening a small floristry shop on the outskirts of the city which enjoyed some early success but eventually had to close. She was devoted to supporting her daughters who went on respectively to successful careers in ice skating and horse racing, and became mothers themselves. She reconnected with the Forces community through volunteering with the Royal British Legion, becoming standard bearer for the Women's Section and bending her energy to fundraising for The Poppy Appeal. During this period Carole became increasingly ill, and was eventually diagnosed with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. She bore this bravely but was forced into early medical retirement.

It was only in the last few years of her life that she rekindled her relationship with the WRAC. Some chance surfing on Facebook led to her joining both the East Riding and Nottinghamshire/Derbyshire branches of the WRAC Association. New and existing bonds were re-kindled, in particular coming face to face after 30+ year gap with her former training corporal! Back among fellow travellers, she became a stalwart member of both branches, venues across Yorkshire and Derby no doubt still bearing the scars. Harrogate certainly would never be the same.

These bonds became so important after Carole was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 2020. Stoical in the face of a grim prognosis and multiple rounds of chemotherapy and major surgery, she remained ever optimistic. The Lionesses circled around their injured sister. Determined as ever to contribute, Carole used her design talent to craft beautiful cards for friends and to raise money for Target Ovarian Cancer and Maggie's Centres. When active treatment was discontinued, Carole returned home for the final part of her journey. A bedside muster parade was held, and Carole was accompanied to the end by her great friends Jackie Smith and Val Shaw – lionesses both.

The Last Post was played at Carole's funeral and the WRAC standard lowered

in her honour. Carole was a month short of her 60th birthday. She is survived by her husband Mick, daughters Lesley and Lizzie, and grandchildren Ella and Sebby. Ella is an honorary "Cub" having been adopted by the East Yorkshire Lionesses.

"Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re"
Mick Murphy



**Mrs MARY ELLEN
NICHOLLS (Nee Dearden),
ATS
15th October 1992 –
28th August 2021**



Mary joined the ATS in 1942 and served as a cook. She was a founder member of Hereford Branch and became Branch President in 2017. Mary will be very much missed throughout our Branch. She always, to the very end, attended our Veterans and post-Christmas luncheons and, of course, our annual picnic, at which she was present just a few weeks before her death. She (with the exception of Covid) continued to always manage to attend our monthly meetings. Mary was mother to Joyce Nicholls.

Lynda Armstrong
Hereford Branch Secretary

Mum Mary was born in Newcastle on Tyne on 15th October 1922. She had four brothers, who all went into the military, Army and Navy, also her dad was in the Army, so it was no surprise mum went into the army herself (she still has one brother, living in Perth, Australia).

After leaving school she worked in The Royal Station Hotel, then on to the NAAFI. She then joined the ATS, went to Fenham Bks to basic training (W/153884), then posted to Chilwell to do trade training, and posted to Hereford as a cook at the Green Dragon, where she met my dad. They married in Much Birch Church, then lived in Wigglesbrook, Kingsthorpe, Much Birch. She left the army in 1945.

One day mum bumped into her Sergeant Major, Ena, in town. They got talking and they said, 'why don't we start a Hereford branch of the WRAC Association'. She came home and told me "Another lady, Jo, was in the ATS, and offered to be Secretary, Ena Treasurer, and we got together recruiting ladies. Our first meeting was in the Green Dragon of course, as that was where we worked. We decided to raise money for our own Standard so held it at the Three Counties".

What did Mary do but sell our secretary's electric cable – she has never lived that down. Mum was President of Hereford WRAC Association after Ena passed away and was really proud to be so.

Mary had a full life with family; always a good supporter of WRAC Association, both at branch level and nationally, where she went to most reunions if she could.

Joyce Nicholls (daughter)



Mrs SHIRLEY REYNOLDS (ATS) June 1921 - 1st Oct 2021



It is with sadness I write to inform you of the passing of Mrs Shirley Reynolds ex-ATS, and member of the IW Branch ATS/WRAC, who celebrated her 100th birthday in June 2021. Shirley's health had deteriorated following a fall earlier in the year, but her daughter, Jackie, wrote that "mum had achieved her goals of reaching her 100th birthday and seeing her granddaughter married this year".

Shirley became a member of the newly formed IW Branch ATS/WRAC around 2015 and over time we sipped tea and ate lots of cake together. She was a valued member of the branch, and also maintained the financial upkeep of an ATS Memorial bench, located outside St James' church in Yarmouth, IW.

Tracy Biddlecombe
IW Branch Secretary



THIRZA SILLICKS (nee Read) 2nd June 1921 – 29th August 2021

Thirza was a Salisbury girl through and through, having been born there and dying there in August. She was a very active branch member in her early days including being the Branch Standard Bearer. She was also an active fundraiser and Poppy seller. Her Association Membership only ceased when Salisbury branch folded a few years ago.

Amanda Foster
Salisbury branch



ALMA GERTRUDE STRIDE (nee Finning) 4th February 1924 - 24th July 2021



Alma Stride (nee Finning) passed away peacefully at home, aged 97, in July. She joined the ATS in 1940 – see her story in Lioness edition 1997 #1.

Alma founded the ATS/Women's Royal Army Corps Association Aylesbury Branch and was awarded a Certificate of Appreciation, in recognition of devoted service given to the Association. She was interviewed in 2020 about her experiences as a Cook during the war for an up-coming book. Sadly she did not see her story in print, but her family did. For the past 12 months, Alma received a weekly phone call from her Buddy Bernadette, as part of the Buddy Buddy Scheme. She so looked forward to and enjoyed those calls. She will be missed by many but not forgotten.

Christine Turpin (Daughter)



SUE TAYLOR Died 23rd July 2021



Sue was born and brought up in Longsight, Manchester, the eldest of 4 Children. Her father was in the Army, but the family did not travel around with him. She spent a lot of time at her

grandparents' house in Vernon Terrace, enjoying the camaraderie of her Mum's younger siblings. She was especially close to Kath, who was only 14 when Sue was born, so she looked upon her as an older sister rather than as an Aunt. This close relationship lasted throughout Sue's life.

When Sue was 14 the family moved to Longmoor in Hampshire which was her Father's final posting in the Army. She attended Petersfield Secondary School where she met and was totally inspired by her PT teacher, Heather McClelland, an Olympic hurdler silver medalist. It was soon evident that Sue was a natural sportswoman and her talents were nurtured and blossomed under Heather's tuition.

On leaving School Sue joined the Women's Royal Army Corps as a PTI (Physical Training Instructor) in 1967 and the rest, they say, is history!

Sue was an extremely talented all-round athlete able to turn her hand to any sport. She represented Great Britain at handball, played Combined Services and Army hockey and was selected for the England hockey squad, but was unable to take her place due to military commitments. In addition she represented the Army in netball, swimming, rounders, table tennis and golf as well as in various athletic field

events. But it was for her prowess on the hockey field that she will be best remembered. A fellow member of the Army hockey team, Rosemary Warne, wrote to me after Sue passed away and said "I was looking at some photos of the Army hockey team the other day and remembered the quiet unassuming figure of Sue, elbows stuck out to the side, holding the stick down at the ready. She was slim, ultra-fit, unflappable and in command of the centre ground, sending accurate shots to the forwards whilst tackling soundly. She was a hockey player's player. No airs and graces or ego trips, but a hard-working sound talent with a real feel for the game and a natural ability to be aware what was happening in the game and to react accordingly. In my mind's eye she is still running enthusiastically across the pitch gathering the ball and sending it on its way with pace and purpose. In my opinion, Sue was the best hockey player never to have played for England".

Sue reached the pinnacle of her career by attaining the rank of Warrant Officer Class 1 and between 1985-1988 she was responsible for all Army women's sports in Germany and Berlin. Sue was offered a Commission on completion of her 22 year Soldier Service in 1989 but decided not to follow that path rather to try Civilian life for the first time instead.

For the next twelve years Sue worked with Manpower Employment Agency as a selection officer and then as an Insurance Clerk with Cornhill Insurance in Guildford and Sun Life of Canada in Basingstoke. She enjoyed them all but missed being her own boss. So, she decided to form her own domestic cleaning business, 'Taylormaid 4 U', and employed 3 ladies to help her. It was a very successful enterprise and she loved every minute of it. She also did house- and pet-sitting right up until 2015 when she moved to Grantham and finally retired.

Between 1994 and 2016 Sue and I lived together in Four Marks near Alton and many of you visited us there. You will all recall how she loved to be in the kitchen, preparing and cooking, trying out her latest recipe leaving me to do 'the front of house' bit! During the 11 years that I was Vice President of the WRAC Association Sue kept 'the home fires burning', answering the myriad of telephone calls, taking and fetching me from the station or to various functions as well as helping me to entertain at Hillcrest - I couldn't have done any of it without Sue by my side.

Sue was happiest working and pottering in the garden or the greenhouse - she was always outside come rain or shine or until it got too dark to see! Her beautiful gardens in Four Marks and Great Gonerby were a great tribute to her and

reflected her flair and talent - she knew just what plants to use to best effect. It was her passion right to the end and even when she was in St Barnabas' in the final month of her life we had instructions to bring the secateurs in so that she could cut back the overgrown shrubs in the hospice garden! She was a great DIY enthusiast too and enjoyed making and constructing all sorts of things for her home and garden. She loved to visit IKEA to see what the latest gadgets were and even after a gruelling chemotherapy session she sometimes managed to fit in a visit to the Nottingham store - they will miss her custom without a doubt!

As a proud Mancunian, Sue was an ardent Manchester United fan and she would settle down in front of the TV whenever her beloved team played. Interestingly she told me quite recently that she was originally a Manchester City fan until the fateful Munich air disaster in 1958 when she switched allegiances to MU. She loved watching all sport and would have been so thrilled to see our successes in this year's Olympics. On leaving the Army she continued to play and enjoy golf until she was physically unable to walk around the course.

In 2017 Sue realised one of her life's ambitions by embarking on a Round the World Cruise lasting 4 Months - an experience she thoroughly enjoyed. I am told that she was nearly left behind in Gibraltar! They were about to raise the gangplank when Sue appeared running down the slipway!

Sue had a tremendous sense of humour and was always great fun. She loved a party and was always one of the first on the dance floor. She had a wonderful sense of rhythm and was a great dancer. She took up Line Dancing latterly in Four Marks and was the life and soul of the weekly meetings where she invariably ended up demonstrating the steps - once a PTI, always a PTI! And Who can forget her famous party piece 'We're all going on a Lion hunt' with all the crazy actions thrown in!

She always kept in touch with her family wherever she was, and her Mum Joan and Aunt Kath enjoyed holidays in Germany and UK with us. Sue was always there too for her brother Peter and sisters Lesley and Carol and they knew she would always go the extra mile for them. In return, Peter and her niece Tania have been a great support to Sue in her final illness.

Sue passed away at home after a courageous two and a half year battle with cancer - it was relentless but she fought it all the way as one would expect of her. After a short stay at St Barnabas' Hospice in Lincoln Sue came home for her final days and died as she wished, looking out at her beautiful garden

surrounded by family, close friends and her two beloved cats.

Sue, you were a legend not just in the PTI world but to your family, friends and myself. You were a devoted, caring and loving sister, aunt and niece as well as a dear friend to so many. You touched and inspired so many people's lives along the way and I am just thankful for the loving memories I have of our many years together. You were loved beyond words and will be missed beyond measure. You lived your life like you played hockey - at pace and with purpose. You will always be loved, never forgotten and forever missed. Rest in Peace my beloved friend and Soulmate, till we meet again over that rainbow.

Sue Westlake



URSULA TROKE (nee Merrill) 1921 - 2021



Ursula Troke, nee Merrill (W/128471), enlisted in February 1942 as a Clerk attached to the Royal Army Pay Corps. She had various postings across the south of UK and was commissioned in 1946 (W466510) and completed her engagement in June 1951. There is a very full and interesting account of her service at ATS Remembered. The link is: <http://www.atsremembered.org.uk/trokesheetpdf.pdf>.

In her retirement Ursula was a member

of Bournemouth Branch WRAC and kept us amused with lively anecdotes and poems. She moved to Winchester in 2012 to be near her family but before that she joined the Branch at a Buckingham Palace Garden Party, where she had been selected to meet the Duchess of Gloucester.

Recently Ursula had moved into a Brendoncare Home in Winchester, where she celebrated her 100th birthday on 7 February 2021.

Val Wright



ANNE EDDIE WALKER (of Dundee) Died 15th September 2021

Anne served in the ATS from February 1943 until September 1947, attaining the rank of Acting Corporal. She worked in one of the Bletchley Park outposts. Her father was puzzled at her lack of promotion, but of course she couldn't tell him! She married Dr Colin Walker in a happy union which lasted for 74 years until her death on 15th September 2021. She had a large and loving family including grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Anne left her body for medical research.

Isobel Gordon



ROSE WATSON (nee Sugarman) ATS 30 March 1922 – 12 October 2021



Born in March 1922 in Leeds, Rose was one of a large family. She was working as a machinist at the Burton clothing factory when war broke out. Only 17 years old she was keen to join her brothers in doing her bit and she joined ATS on 5 September 1939 - astutely she gave her age as 19 and was accepted.



Initially sent to Woodhouse Moor, on the outskirts of Leeds, to serve with 66 Leeds Rifles – a TA unit as an orderly - she found herself moved around to where there was a need and remembers going to Strensall Camp, York. It was one of those days when the rain never stopped; she had to peel a whole sack of onions which she managed without a tear, due to the rain she thought. Rose was “promoted” to cook and fed the soldiers manning Yorkshire’s anti-aircraft guns. This was the period of the Blitz which saw so much devastation visited upon the County’s cities. Unsurprisingly she was called “sugar” from her surname. She earned a shilling a day of which 8 pence went home to help Mum and the rest was hers! She remembers the day her mother walked to the campsite to see her and walked right past her - she was covered in soot from cleaning the boiler chimney!

After the war she became a bus conductor and married one of her passengers in 1950. She became the mother of two boys. Early in her married life she joined RBL and WI, she was a great cook and baker. Even in her nineties she would bring a cake to the Canterbury Branch meeting nearest her birthday. She became heavily involved in RBL and on coming to Folkestone after her husband died, she became a poppy seller stalwart. She was 65 years in RBL and a tribute to her with a photo was placed outside Morrison’s in Cheriton – her pitch for many years. She was honoured by Folkestone Town mayor who presented her with a For Merit award for her sterling work with RBL.

She joined Canterbury Branch at about the same time – 1996 and quickly settled in. She was a great talker, with lovely Yorkshire wit and directness. She was always game to do things and support outings even in her nineties, coming by bus from Folkestone to Canterbury if we could not collect her. Her exploits did not stop there, she travelled widely around the globe, went to many meetings and reunions with Royal Artillery Association, RBL and us in this country. At her funeral three standards were

paraded: Royal Artillery Association, Royal British Legion, Folkestone branch and our own Canterbury Branch WRAC Association standard.

A great surprise for her was to be chosen to go to London in 2017 to take part in 100 years of Women in the Armed Services. She knew little of what was to happen but found herself beautifully gowned mixing with representatives of other services and Army. Her comment was: “Even at my age (95) you never know where life will take you.” Rose spent the last few months in the care of her son and daughter-in-law and died with them just 6 months short of her hundredth birthday. Rose, we salute you, life will be so much quieter without your laughter and chat, you were a lady of bravery, courage and strength and with a great sense of adventure.

Susan Wing, Canterbury Branch



Last Post

Ansell, Mrs Jean of Alcester, Birmingham in September 2021 (ATS)

Burt, Mrs Margaret (nee Sands), South Shields on 22nd November 2021

Butler, Ms Veronica (Roni) (nee Gregory) of Weymouth on 1st December 2021 (WRAC)

Colclough, Mrs Ann (nee Douglas) of Alicante, Spain in October 2021 (WRAC)

Crothers, Mrs Robbina (Binny) of Belfast in September 2021 (ATS/WRAC)

Doswell, Miss Doris of Leicester on 25 September 2021 (ATS)

Fox, Mrs Jackie (nee Cheater) of Chester-le-Street on 13th March 2021 (WRAC)

Lewis, Mrs Dulcie (nee Brandon) of Bridgnorth on 23rd October 2021 (ATS)

Lynch, Mrs Helen (nee Cobb)

Moss, Mrs Enid (nee Wheldon) of North Yorkshire on 7th December 2021 (ATS)

Nuttall, Mrs Vi (nee Theobald) of Sudbury, Suffolk on 23rd August 2021 (ATS)

Poole, Mrs Lynne (nee Merrin), of Gloucester in October 2021 (WRAC)

Rimell, Mrs Jennifer (nee Smith) of Kidderminster in December 2019 (WRAC)

Sillicks, Mrs Thirza (Nee Read) of Salisbury on 29th August 2021 (ATS)

Simson, Mrs Edna (nee Dearlove) of South Australia on 26th October (ATS)

Stride, Mrs Alma (nee Finning) of Great Yarmouth on 24th July 2021 (ATS)

Troke, Mrs Ursula (nee Merrill) of Bournemouth in December 2021 (ATS)

Walker, Mrs Anne (nee Gillieson) of Dundee on 15th September 2021 (ATS)

Watkins, Mrs Sharon of Fife on 11th December 2021 (WRAC)

Watson, Mrs Rose (nee Sugarman), of Folkestone in October 2021 (ATS)



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 **1st JUNE 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. Tickets are open to any member of the WRAC Association who wishes to attend. Prior attendance or Branch participation are not a prerequisite.



• **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** – if you are interested in attending please contact HQ Office/Tanya via letter or email (office.manager@wraca.org.uk) no later than 01 July 2022.

• **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 and so we encourage you to apply to attend here (especially if you are unsuccessful with tickets for the London Cenotaph). 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 multiple-year (3, 6 or 10 years) subscriptions (after your initial first year of Membership). See Member Log-in area of the Association website or telephone HQ office manager on 0300-400-1992. (No discounts apply).

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. 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'.

Letters.....

A belated apology prompted by the item on Page 52 of Issue 2021#2):

Re Helen Tetford ending up in Portugal.

In February 1986 I was stationed at one of the two other sister Signal Squadrons to Helen's. When we heard that someone from the other Sqn had ended up in Lisbon instead of Lisburn you can imagine the jokes. We were all highly amused at the 'mess up' of paperwork from her admin office!!

Now I've read what happened - belated apologies, on behalf of 3 Sqn, to the clerks of the time at Helen's Sqn!!

Jill Trainor
Gillingham, Dorset.

Hello ladies,
My letter is delayed by many months in reply that I had gratefully received my very first issue of the Lioness. Thank you to everyone for the many hours spent to create your inspiring publication. I congratulate your outstanding work. To decide what there was room for was a challenge, I am sure. It is a tremendous publication honouring the members of the Women's Royal Army Corps Association for their past military careers and their continued enthusiasm in all that they do to support the Association.

I've read and re-read the enclosed articles. It is a true endeavour performed by many with wonderful success. As we carry on in so many ways I am honoured to receive my complementary Life membership of the WRAC Association.

With my sincerest gratitude,
Lynda Holmes
(Canada)

Ref: Sylvia Wild W/262011

I am writing back to those who sent my mother Christmas cards as she cannot send cards any longer as her hand is too shaky. Thank you for remembering my mother, who was a Corporal in the ATS, serving in France, Belgium and Germany as a member of General Montgomery's Normandy invasion force, following a year spent in his planning team in Hammersmith.

Before she served, she worked as a secretary in London, with an office near Fleet Street and commuted from South of the river right throughout the Blitz in 1940/1. She wrote a book about her wartime experiences *Woman at the Front* when in her eighties.

She is now 98 years old and still lives independently with the help of carers. She thanks you for your card.

I often wonder if there are any other women still alive who served in France in WWII after D-Day. My mother was one of the first, landing from a landing craft about 3 weeks after D-Day when she had just turned 21. I'm sure my mother would be interested to know how many, and who, are still alive.

Kind regards,
David Wild (son)
[Received by email]

A plea to see if anyone remembers the following lady ...

My mother-in-law, when she was a young girl, was in the army; she was a military police lady when she met my husband's father. Her name was Ester Maria Castle, and she lived in Somerset (I think she said). My father-in-law was Henry Frederick Elbro, but he didn't like the name Henry, so always called himself Fred.

Now here is a strange thing, Fred/Henry divorced, and he wed again, and the name of his new wife was ... Ester Maria Castle; no relation and not the same person. My husband joined the R.N and always said he would have liked to have been the fly on the wall. Now Fred never checked the name as he always

knew her as 'Ettie'. I can't remember exactly what she said the name was of where she came from, but it was the port that the majority of the boats came from that sailed over to Dunkirk to help bring the soldiers back. She was a "Fanny! (One of my husband's brothers, Len was in the Army, and was in/on Easter Island).

If anyone knows either of the ladies, I would love to hear from them. My only contact with the WRAC is, or has been up to now, their Christmas Dinner that was held in Stoke, Plymouth, Devon. The lady who used to organise it was called Ruth - sorry don't know her surname, but I used to enjoy going, and listening to all the stories of the ladies that used to attend.

I wish everyone a very Happy New Year.
Yours Carmel Elbro, Plymouth, Devon

[Editor: If anyone remembers either / any of these ladies, particularly in the Plymouth area, please contact the HQ Office and we will put you in touch with Carmel]

Dear editor,
I saw Pauleen Annette's letter and photos regarding the WRAC staff band. It jogged a memory as I recognised LCpl Jeffree from the photo. She and I were one of four WRAC NCOs who applied for and were accepted via RCB to Office Cadet Training Unit (OCTU) in 1955. We all successfully passed the course, commissioning in March 1956.

Thank you
Mary Pagan



From left to right: Janet Jeffree, Brenda Stone, Anne Camillerie and me, Mary Hancock

Looking for ...

Sylvia Cornwall (nee Quinn), an Association Member who now lives in Spain, phoned the office just before Christmas to thank the Association for the Christmas card. She also enquired if there are any other Members living in Spain who she could link up with.

If this is you, and you are willing and able to connect with Sylvia to share memories, experiences and the comradeship the Association is so well known for, please contact HQ Office and we will happily put you in touch.

In August we received the following email regarding Major Pamela Wyndham-Tate:

“I am researching the military career of Major Pamela Wyndham-Tate. She served initially in the ATS during World War Two and subsequently in the WRAC. I gather that on retirement she was curator at the WRAC museum. I have obtained details of her promotion from The London Gazette. I also found a couple of photographs online, taken after she had retired and when she was at the museum. Given her long service and her association with the museum I imagine there will be an obituary in the Lioness. Perhaps there will be other career details and/or photographs in the archives.

I would be very grateful for any assistance that you are able to provide. I would, of course, be prepared to pay for any research materials that may be available.

I do hope someone can help ”.

Kind regards
Alan Moore (Colonel, Ret'd)

The information we were able to provide was:

Sadly, we have not been able to find out much about her - we have searched through back-copies of our Members' magazine Lioness and the only reference we can find is her listing in Last Post (which is purely name, last known basic address and date of death). The two Life Vice-Presidents of ours who have the best memories of the WRAC history between them have recalled that:

She transferred to the WRAC from the ATS (so that would have been in 1949)
She served as Officer Commanding 29 Company WRAC in Rheindahlen,
And worked in Corps HQ for a time (sorry, no specific dates for either of these)
Unfortunately, no-one recalls her ever being Curator of the WRAC Museum.

Mr Moore's response added a little more:

“There are some photos online, showing her as a Retired Officer at WRAC HQ in Guildford. Apparently, she was interviewed at the time for a feature in The Observer newspaper. I have obtained her promotion details from The London Gazette, covering her ATS and WRAC service, as well as a notification of her death on 26 April 2009 at Teignmouth, Devon. Apparently, her service in World War Two included command of a motor transport platoon in the ATS in London.

Kind regards
Alan

[Mr Moore has offered to share any more information he might find - but are any of you able to recall Major Pamela Wyndham-Tate and her service/career? If so, please send them into the Association office and we will share with Mr Moore.

Editor]

Thank you so much for your [Christmas] card and gift to me when you came to The Royal Hospital Chelsea on 13th December 2021. I didn't forget that you were coming but I was put into isolation that day with shingles and a 6-week-old cough. They were worried about the new covid variant with my immune system not up to scratch. When your gift arrived that certainly cheered me up a lot. This is my home now and I certainly would like to meet you when you come again. Thank you again for making my day. Happy Christmas to you all.

Anne Phipps
(Ex Sgt From 591 (EOD)(RE)(V)sqn
and 221 (EOD)(RE)(V)
sqn)

[Editor: and subsequent reply when we enquired after her health -]

“I am [now] out of isolation now after giving two negative tests - they are taking this new covid variant very seriously here. I look forward to receiving my copy of Lioness. Thank you for all your good wishes.

My mum, Violet Alice Gertrude Winn, was in the ATS and I have her brown Army Book 64. Her number was W/8783, born 4.8.1911. My dad was RE and they met when both were serving at Kitchener Barracks in Chatham. They married and her surname changed to Bathe. Have a happy Christmas and New Year”.

Anne Phipps (R.H.C. IP No. 008)



ADVERT FOR EAST MIDLANDS AREA

Area Co-ordinators act as the links between Membership Council, Association HQ and Branches, and remain part of your Membership Council, which meets in London twice a year. The Area Co-ordinators arrive the previous evening for an Area Forum, the ideal opportunity to talk through issues you all have in common. Nominations for WRAC Association Mention in Dispatches come from Branches to you, before going to Membership Council. It is hoped that Area Co-ordinators will continue to organise a regular / annual AGM or get-together for your area – another great opportunity to share and promote ‘comradeship, support and esprit de corps’ for “Women who Served”.

East Midlands – is looking for a new Area Co-ordinator. If you are in the East Midlands Area (branches include Derby, E.Riding & N.Lincs, Grantham, Leicestershire & Nottinghamshire, Lincoln & District, Lincolnshire, Peterborough & District and York) and are interested please let us know at HQ Office.



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**

Legacies & Donations

IN MEMORIAM

Since the last Lioness kind donations were made by individuals and Branches in memory of the following persons:

Jean Ansell RIP

Mary Ellen Nicholls RIP

Emily Tippet RIP

LEGACIES

Since the last Lioness the WRAC Association very much appreciated the legacies received from the following people:

Kathleen Laurence-Smith RIP

Joan Winifred Bowden 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.

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





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



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

