



Australian Women's
Army Service 1941–1947



Women's Royal Australian
Army Corps 1951–1984

AWAS WRAAC JOURNAL

March 2016

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From the Editor



Dear Members,

To our contributors, thank you so much for your participation over the past year, it is greatly appreciated by members, their families and friends. It is so pleasing when interest is shown following a particular story or event.

Therefore, I ask you to keep up the good work by sharing your service memories. In our current edition we join Eunice Leong and follow her journey from civilian to a member of the AWAS (Sigs).

As we gather around the Furphy for a welcome cuppa, we remember the War years and with the benefit of hindsight reflect on the aftermath of conflict and the sacrifice of others.

Enjoy your Journal.

Yours in friendship,

Jude Pinkerton-Treloar

Editor

August 2016 Journal Deadline



*The deadline for all articles to be
included in the August 2016 Journal is*

FRIDAY 3rd JUNE 2016

**Articles can be
posted or e-mailed to:**

Editor AWAS/WRAAC Journal

Postal Address:

Post Office Box 307 SAN REMO VIC 3925

E-mail:

johnltreoar1@bigpond.com

— 2016 — Calendar of Events

— DATE —	— EVENT —
February	
Friday 12 th – Monday 15 th	WRAAC 65th Anniversary Canberra
March	
Friday 18 th	AWAS Special General Meeting ANZAC House 4 Collins Street, MELBOURNE at 1100 hrs
April	
Friday 1 st – Sunday 3 rd	Swan Hill Ex Servicewomen
Monday 25 th	ANZAC Day
May	
Sunday 15 th	AWAS/WRAAC Service; Shrine of Remembrance
July	
Sunday 3 rd	Reserve Forces Day Parade/Commemorative Service Shrine of Remembrance at 1000hrs.
Saturday 23 rd	WRAAC Luncheon at International Brighton.

From the AWAS President

Welcome to our first Journal for 2016 and trust you had a happy Christmas and New Year.

In March this year we will be having a Special General Meeting to seek your permission to wind-up the AWAS Association (Vic) Inc. We urge you to attend the meeting on the 18th March 2016 as after many productive years we wish to finish on a happy and positive note. Your input is important.

We intend to hold the last Reunion Luncheon in August to say our final farewell. A letter will be sent out to all AWAS members regarding the meeting.

Yours in friendship,

Gwenda Walker



Eunice Leong Nee Chinn

— VF346714 —

MY AWAS SERVICE

(A Personal Perspective)

It is said that you should never begin a piece of writing with an apology, however, as it is 73 years since I first joined the AWAS, if my memory fails at times on dates and names, I apologize in advance.

As I recollect, only three girls of Chinese descent in Victoria joined the forces in the Second World War — my sister who was in the WAAF, a WAAF Nurse Phillis Anguey and myself. This is not surprising, because we were brought up strictly, had never left home, had never mixed with strangers, and had never travelled. In our case, I can only surmise that our father gave permission to our joining up was because China had been fighting against the Japanese invasion alone for four years.

My sister and I had trained in the Australian Women's Legion in First Aid, and at the RMIT as wireless telegraphers in case male operators were called up, so were able to begin working immediately as operators after "rookies".

My introduction to "rookies" was certainly a shock. The facilities at Glamorgan, the junior school of Melbourne Grammar were totally inadequate. Can you imagine ten or more naked women of all shapes and sizes trying to get under the one shower which was in a bath? The rest of this period, I have cheerfully forgotten.

The first AWAS wireless telegraphers began working at the HQ of Heavy Wireless in Queen's Road, Melbourne.

Two experienced male operators the, Donovan brothers, who were very helpful to us, worked the link to East Timor sporadically, because our soldiers there were constantly on the move — Timor being occupied by the Japanese. The other link was to Chongking the war-time capital of China.

At first, we were in camp, under canvas but very comfortable, at Park Orchards and were driven each day to Queen's Road. Later, we operated out of Park Orchards. We worked on shift work on a 24 hour basis which, in fact, had some advantages as well as disadvantages. The early wireless AWAS operators were a very close-knit group, somewhat supercilious, as we were quite few, but established enduring friendships.

It was decided to send us as detachments of six operators to all the capitals of Australia. The first group leader to Sydney was Beryl Burford who, until her recent passing, became our voluntary amanuensis who kept us all up to date with one another long after the war to the present.

We were accommodated in a unit in Sydney, but were not really under its jurisdiction because we belonged to Signals HQ. After a short period, to my surprise, I was sent with Beryl to NCO's school in New South Wales. We were sure that we were chosen because they wanted to get rid of our many complaints. In any case, we emerged from the school as corporals.

My next move, which rather dismayed me, was to the almost unknown Alice Springs in 1944. I was sent in charge of the detachment. The members, as I remember, were June McPherson, Florrie?, Dottie Owler (Campbell), Molly Blackstock (Pillar) and another Sig whose name I can't recall. We were housed in the AWAS camp which comprised mainly South Australian AWAS.

A male lieutenant was theoretically our chief, but as we seldom saw him and he did not belong to Signals, we were virtually independent. In some ways, we were fortunate. Being directed by HQ Signals, no-one outside our detachment knew who was rostered for duty, nor what time we began or ended our shifts, so we were free to do whatever we wanted when not on duty.

The journey to Alice Springs from Adelaide was an unforgettable experience. It took, as I remember three days,

because of usual breakdowns of the old Ghan, on a railway track similar to that of Puffing Billy. It was an enjoyable and interesting trip for our group. I had always asserted that to travel with my back to the engine would make me sick, but having found three other bridge players, I didn't even notice I had travelled all the way with my back to the engine.

Much to our surprise, as the train was travelling mostly through the desert, we expected to see just plains of undulating red soil. Instead, the desert contained life — patches of spinifex grass, occasionally a stunted mulga trees and, hiding low under green leaves, brilliant red and black Sturt Desert peas.

Then there were the mirages. We were sure that there were lakes in the desert. I had never believed one could really see mirages, but we experienced them on that journey and believed that we were seeing vast expanses of water.



The desert in some ways is very beautiful — vast, eternal, peaceful — untouched by civilisation, but deadly for its lack of water — *"the beauty and the terror"* of our wide, brown land.

Alice Springs then consisted almost entirely of one long, main road, dominated at one end by the AWAS camp and at the other by the Army

Transport units who transported all manner of secret goods and products *"up the track"* somewhere up towards, but not quite as far as Darwin.

We were totally unaware that Darwin had been bombed by the Japanese although we knew that some local people had come from Darwin.



Very few Aboriginal people were visible, but perhaps it was because we did not visit the town as there were scarcely any shops, and none suited to our needs. We also travelled everywhere, as I remember, in army vehicles. The paintings of Albert Namatjira were, however, already famous in Alice Springs and we saw many copies of his works. The vivid reds and blues of his landscape and, the stark contrast of his luminous shadows are a true depiction of the supposed “dead” heart of Australia.

Life in “*The Alice*” apart from work seemed almost idyllic. The days were very hot, but we were young and enjoyed the heat, and the nights were cool. I expect that the relative freedom we enjoyed compensated in part for our isolation. As male soldiers outnumbered the AWAS by more than fifty to one at least, females were popular and had the choice of as many suitors as they desired.

Despite the discrepancy of numbers between female and male soldiers, there was never any hint of unacceptable behaviour as far as we were aware, and army camps are quite a hotbed of rumours. We were also rather naïve and perhaps, being young and inexperienced, were protected by a certain innocence. Our accommodation was in permanent plaster-board units, divided into rooms which were shared by two AWAS.

There was no furniture in the rooms except for beds, but all the AWAS could find young soldiers eager to make them rough cupboards or shelves to find favour.

Our work as wireless operators was very intense. It demanded complete concentration to avoid any mistake in the coded messages. It was sometimes difficult if transmission was poor because of outside conditions, or a poor signal, and sometimes it was due to poor operating.



At some time, any operator could break down and that meant that to be accurate, the speed of transmission would be very slow.

There was also the strain of constant shift work, hot ear-phones clamped to the head, and having to sleep in the heat of day, but we managed it satisfactorily and even enjoyed it.

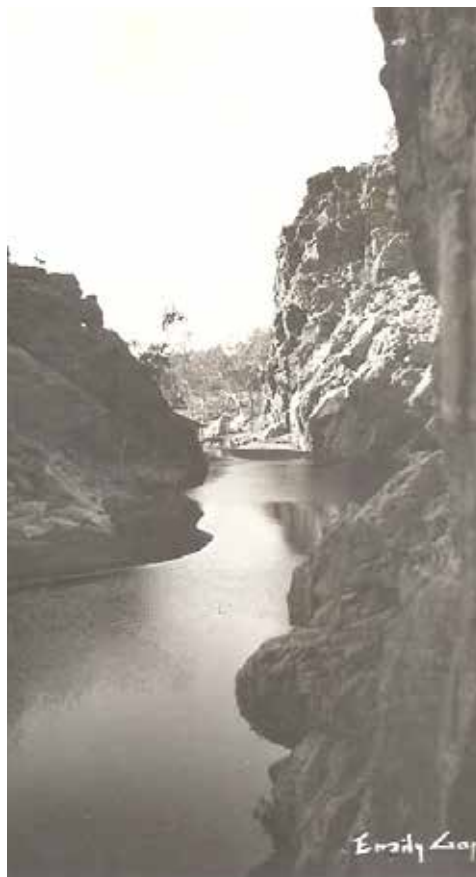
(Above) Eunice with a fellow AWAS enjoying some free time in the Alice.

As our small group worked independently from the rest of the camp, we became very close, and some friendships continued lifelong.

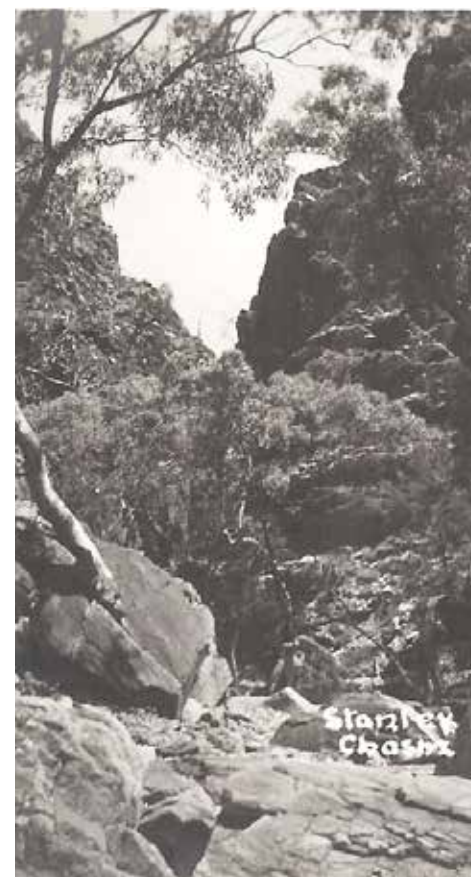


We always went out as a group, excepting for the operator on duty, and surprisingly, there was seldom any disagreement among us, as any problem that arose was solved by discussion. We also had good relations with the other South Australian AWAS with whom we shared outings and socialising when we were free.

The members of the group agreed that the time in *"the Alice"* was one of the happiest in our wartime experience. I was also promoted to sergeant at this time and had the bonus of a room to myself, although it was usually filled with the other members of our group. Perhaps it was the isolation of our position which bonded us, as normal off-duty recreations were limited, and we missed our families.



EMILY GAP



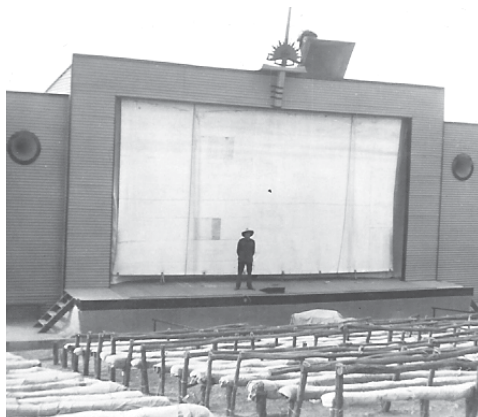
STANDLEY CHASM

We grew to know each other's families well, just by constantly talking about them and sharing any cakes or other scarce goods sent to us by them.

All the AWAS were really overwhelmed with kindness. The landscape around Alice Springs is very beautiful. The MacDonnell ranges overlook Alice Springs and the red soil emphasises the vibrant colours of the green leaves of plants, and the brilliance of the blue skies. In our leisure times, we were taken to visit beauty spots like Emily Gap and Standley Chasm which are lofty cliffs with small trickles of water running through underneath — something exceptional in such a dry area.

Other AWAS were able to get leave to be taken further *"up the track"* to other places, towards Darwin,





and I remember their talking about one place called, I think, Palm Springs, which was apparently very beautiful. For our group, however, this was not an option as we worked a 24-hour shift.

We were taken on picnics on days off, or nights off which were cool and pleasant. Then there were dances every Saturday night when girls had

dances booked till the end of the evening, and there was an open-air cinema on several nights a week. We visited the headquarters of the Flying Doctors Service run by a Protestant Pastor, and learned of their vitally important work.

There were also concerts arranged by the former leader of the Victorian Banjo Club, whose name, alas, I have forgotten, who was a member of a civilian group of people also working in Alice Springs. As I played the piano, I was often called upon to accompany any singer or musician. All AWAS usually carried civilian clothes with them "*just in case*" they had a chance to wear them at an outside invitation or social gathering.



I remember one concert in particular, when I accompanied a young singer who had been a member of the Viennese Boys' Choir visiting Australia when the war broke out, and was forced to stay in Australia. He had a beautiful tenor voice, and his name was Stefan Haag, who later became the director of the Sydney Opera Company.

I also remember a brilliant violinist from the Sydney Symphony Orchestra whose musical accompaniment was so difficult that I very nervous that I would ruin his solo.

When I think about it, I often have to laugh. On this particular concert, I played a piano solo "*Rush hour in Hong Kong*", by Abram Chassins, and sang a famous Chinese folksong "*Jasmine*" in Chinese.



I wore a long, satin Chinese dress (cheong sam, so-called) and I received a most thunderous applause which I am sure was only because of the dress. When I look back, I think how bizarre it was — in the middle of a desert in the heart of Australia, in Chinese dress, singing in Chinese to a mixed audience of mostly male soldiers, local civilians and Army women.

The detachment spent six months in Alice Springs and we were then on leave. It was during that leave that I met up with my school-girl friend Lorna Bushnell whom I hadn't seen for a few years, as she had been stationed in Queensland. After the war, we met twice overseas. Lorna was a secretary in the Australian Diplomatic Service and travelled extensively overseas.

We met twice in Europe, once, when Lorna came to visit me when I was on study leave and she was in Brussels, again when I stayed with her in Geneva. We had lunch together at least once a year, ever since. I was very saddened recently when she passed away and the AWAS Association was represented by Jude Pinkerton-Treloar at her funeral. She will always be in my thoughts with my Sig. pal Beryl Burfurd.

I expected to be sent to another capital after my leave, but was a little disappointed at being returned to Alice Springs with two of my original group and some other operators from Heavy Wireless.

We worked together again very harmoniously and life carried on again much as it had during our first six months. The novelty of being there had, of course, worn off, but it was still enjoyable working in *"the Alice"*, and the climate was just as good. Again, the six months passed quite quickly and we were on leave again.

It was now at the beginning 1945 and the costly war was slowly coming to an end. Instead of being sent on detachment again, I was told I was going to Bonegilla to train new AWAS in signals procedure. I was naturally disconcerted, as I had enjoyed the wireless operating experience, and of course, being independent of many rules and regulations.

Before the new trainees came in, the instructors were taught how to instruct by a Colonel who had been the head of the Department of Education at Melbourne University.



VF509863 Sig L. G. Bushnell

I did not know then, but what I learnt was to be of the greatest importance to my future career. He was a splendid teacher and I will always remember his words when he said that *"a good teacher sells him/herself"*.



I found the truth of those words much later. The last batch of trainees were girls who had been trained as guards along the coast of Australia. I heard that they were extremely tough, had been taught to use a rifle and were most reluctant to re-train as wireless operators and would give me a bad time. I was very nervous that I would be unable to control the class, but apart from the fact that they were not really interested in the re-training, I found them to be a very interesting group and we got on famously. Whether they learned anything is another matter, but the war finished soon after and it was never necessary.

I stayed in Bonegilla till the end of the war. The Army provided assistance for what careers we could follow after discharge. I had no clear idea of what I should do after the war.

My music teacher wanted me to take music as a career, but I was not prepared to put in the hours and hours of practice each day.

I had thought of journalism, so took a course with RMIT and had the luck to have as a tutor, the Australian author, Alan Marshall, who taught me just how cliché-ridden my writing was and how I could improve it. I am very grateful for the admirable advice received from him.

In the end, I went back again to school which I had left just before the Matriculation year, much to my parents' disapproval and distress. I matriculated and went on to further studies. I will never forget what Army service taught me.

The great pity among its members of education, background, beliefs and outlook meant that tolerance was the first life lesson learned. I never experienced any discrimination or prejudice in the AWAS because of my Chinese background. Team work was another essential in our work, and the ability to discuss and decide on matters without compromising principles was another important step in preparation for life.

It is possible that I would never have known and appreciated the vastness and the beauty of the “dead” heart of Australia, had it not been for my Army service. I also learned what responsibility meant and the need for self-discipline. These were the lessons carried on throughout my life.

On looking back, I suppose I joined up somewhat selfish and complacent, and left knowing the importance of sharing, loyalty and the acceptance of others' views.

My husband and I were interviewed a few years ago by a Chinese television crew who were very surprised and interested to learn that I had been in the Australian Army, and wanted to know something of my experiences. The video was later screened throughout China and some friends in China were very surprised to see my photo. So the AWAS is not only known to the Western world but also to the East.

Thank you Eunice for sharing your AWAS story with us, it was truly an amazing journey. We look forward to catching up with you soon. — Ed.



Veronica (Ronnie) Wilson

*We loved this interesting article sent to us by Heather (Rankin) Fry.
It's about her late Auntie Dot's friend, Ronnie.*

Veronica (Ronnie) Wilson celebrated her 100th birthday in July 2014 at RSL Talbarra Aged Care Facility, Queensland. Ronnie has had a remarkable life with her career taking her to various countries throughout the world.

Her international career commenced just after the end WW2 when she was sent to Shanghai, China by UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration). Ronnie left Shanghai very quickly, one day before the Communist army moved in the staff were paid off, given a ticket and told to get themselves home. They managed to leave Shanghai on a very over-laden flight via Hong Kong.

Ronnie later worked with FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) in Rome and then UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) in Sydney until 1957. Ronnie then worked with UNTAB (United Nations Technical Assistance Board), later UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) in Jakarta for six years.

This was the period when the Dutch were just moving out and Dutch was spoken rather than English so communication was quite challenging. Ronnie then moved onto Nairobi, which was still very much British colonial, but it was six months before Independence therefore it was Ronnie's third consecutive posting which was going through an extraordinary period of social and political change.

Ronnie's next posting was to Lagos in 1967 followed by postings to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania for three years and finally New Delhi, India. During her career Ronnie saw a lot of poverty and hardship but sadly had to accept that you could only help people to a certain degree. Ronnie also met a lot of people resulting in lifelong friendships, some of these friendships were formed with people who worked with UN after Ronnie but had heard of her and made contact so those friendships were formed.

Ronnie had an extraordinary career, especially for a woman of her era, indicating how proficient she was at her work and know doubt very well regarded. Ronnie retired at sixty to enjoy the rest of her life in Queensland, mainly on the Sunshine Coast.

Ronnie had one sister, Mary Wilson. Mary was enlisted into the AWAS (VX127970) 29 November 1943 in Hawthorn and later was enlisted in the WRAAC (3275F) being discharged 20 August 1952. Mary attained the rank of Sergeant. During WW2 one of Mary's posting was to Adelaide River.



(Above) Ronnie getting ready to enjoy a glass of WRAAC Wine.

After her discharge from the army Mary spent a lot of her time in Darwin, leaving Darwin after Cyclone Tracy to reside in Queensland. Mary Wilson has since passed away.

Maybe some of our AWAS/WRAAC ladies knew Mary Wilson.

Heather (Rankin) Fry

Our thanks to Heather (Rankin) Fry for sharing Ronnie's amazing story with us. If you knew Ronnie's sister, Mary Wilson (AWAS/WRAAC) we would certainly pass it on to the ladies. — Ed.

SWAG NEWS

Three Dimensional Art and Sculptor



The AWAS Encouragement Award for 2015 went to Mr Arthur Watson for his excellent work of a model steam engine scaled to plan. Joan Johnstone on behalf of the AWAS Association presented Arthur with his award.

Arthur served six years with the RAAF with time in the South West Pacific. He flew with the 8th United States Bomber Group in late 1945. Arthur had five tours over Japan. Arthur (95 years young) pictured with his son Mark following the presentation ceremony.

Swan Hill Reunion



We have been advised that the next gathering at Swan Hill will be held on the weekend of Friday 1st – Sunday 3rd April 2016. Remember this is not an organised event so it is suggested you arrange accommodation very soon.

Members prefer to stay at The Jane Eliza Motel Telephone **03 5032 4411** with its close proximity to the Swan Hill Railway Station and the RSL Club.



ANZAC Day Commemoration March

25th APRIL 2016

This year we have been informed
that our step off position will be in Swanston Street East
next to Federation Square at 9.50am.

We have enclosed the protocol as directed by the
ANZAC Commemorative Committee regarding the march.

The Medical Identification Card to be carried by all
participating in the ANZAC Day 2016 March.

ANZAC Day 2016 MEDICAL IDENTIFICATION CARD

Name: _____

Address: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Brief Medical History: _____

Allergies: _____

Medications (name, dosage, frequency): _____

— Next of Kin —

Name: _____

Relationship: _____

Home Telephone: _____ Mobile: _____

Name: _____

Relationship: _____

Home Telephone: _____ Mobile: _____

TO BE RETAINED BY MEMBER
CARRY IN TOP LEFT HAND POCKET



Protocol

(To be followed)



- All marchers should form-up and march six (6) abreast.
- Veterans are to march directly behind their unit banner, accompanied by one carer if needed. That carer should be of an age where they can directly assist the Veteran. Veterans having difficulty completing the March, and all WW2 Veterans, are encouraged to use the transport provided, but must remain in the vehicle until the March is completed.
- If a Veteran must fall out of the March he or she should be directed to a Marshall for assistance. Unit Associations are to continue moving so as not to disrupt the momentum of the March.
- Descendants are to march behind the Veterans, and be old enough to march the full distance (approximately 1km) without assistance.
- Representation of your Veteran forebears is to be restricted to one descendant per Veteran and the descendant is to wear the Veterans medals on the right breast (the left breast is reserved for the original recipient of the medals).
- Descendants are to dress in appropriate clothing, as your forebears would have done. Therefore, all marchers should wear neat and tidy clothing, out of respect for the fallen (torn denim, sporting attire dirty joggers are not considered appropriate).
- The carrying of framed photographs of relatives, and the pushing of prams and pushers, is not permitted.
- Veterans are requested not to join or leave the March other than at the Assembly and Dispersal points.



WRAAC ASSOCIATION (VIC) INCORPORATED



Certificate of Incorporation No.: A0051572X

PRESIDENT: Margaret Jager
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Diane Sherry

UNIT 73 / 2 GREMEL ROAD
RESERVOIR. VIC. 3073
Telephone: 408 553 412

Website: www.wraacvic.com

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

I:
(Mrs, Miss, Ms, Rank) (Surname) (Given Names)

Maiden Name (If Applicable): Date of Birth:

Address:

..... Postcode:

Telephone (Home): (Mobile): (Work):

Email Address:

Apply to become a Member of the Women's Royal Australian Army Corps Association (Victoria) Incorporated. In the event of my admission as a Member, I agree to be bound by the Rules of the Association for the time being in force.

Cost of Membership: Annual Membership (\$8.00 per year) Life Membership (\$80.00)

(Circle Type of Membership required) Payment Enclosed: Cheque. Cash. Other.

(Please Circle) - Branch of Service. ARA. CMF. ARES. AWAS. OTHER:

Regt No. WRAAC or Unit/s Served/Serving with Approx. Dates

.....

.....

.....

Nominated By.

Name: Membership No:

PLEASE RETURN FORM TO

Miss. Diane Sherry,
73/2 Gremel Road, Reservoir. Vic. 3073
Telephone: 0408 553 412
Email Address: dishe1946@yahoo.com.au



CONSENT FORM

I consent to the following details relating to myself and my service history being published in the Association Newsletter/Journal and Association website www.wraacvic.com

I understand that this information is for the purpose of advising other members of my joining the Association and with a view to renewing old friendships.

DETAILS TO BE PUBLISHED

Service Number:

Given Names:

Surname:

Maiden Name (If Applicable):

Units Served with Approximate Years Served (Dates)

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Signed: Date:

ONLY THOSE DETAILS FILLED IN BY THE APPLICANT WILL BE PUBLISHED

DO NOT COMPLETE THE ABOVE FORM if you do not wish to have your details published. Your decision to publish or not will be respected without question

FOR COMMITTEE USE ONLY: Application Accepted. Yes / No. (Please Circle)

Meeting Date: Receipt No: Dated:

Annual Membership Card No: Date:

Life Membership Card Issued No: Date:



LEDGERWOOD Agnes (nee Lambie) VF510457

Search Lights Dvr

MILL Beryl (nee Pickering) VF509192

AWAS

RIDOUTT Lorraine (nee Sprunt) VF510426

DRO & 2nd Ech 20th May 2015

DURANCE-SLOSS Linda Ruth (nee Durance) F31831

3 WRAAC Co Kew & 3 EMES Unit 12th August 2015

CARNE Heather (nee McKelvie) F32528

RAANC 24th June 2015

KEATING Gladys Ella VF512698

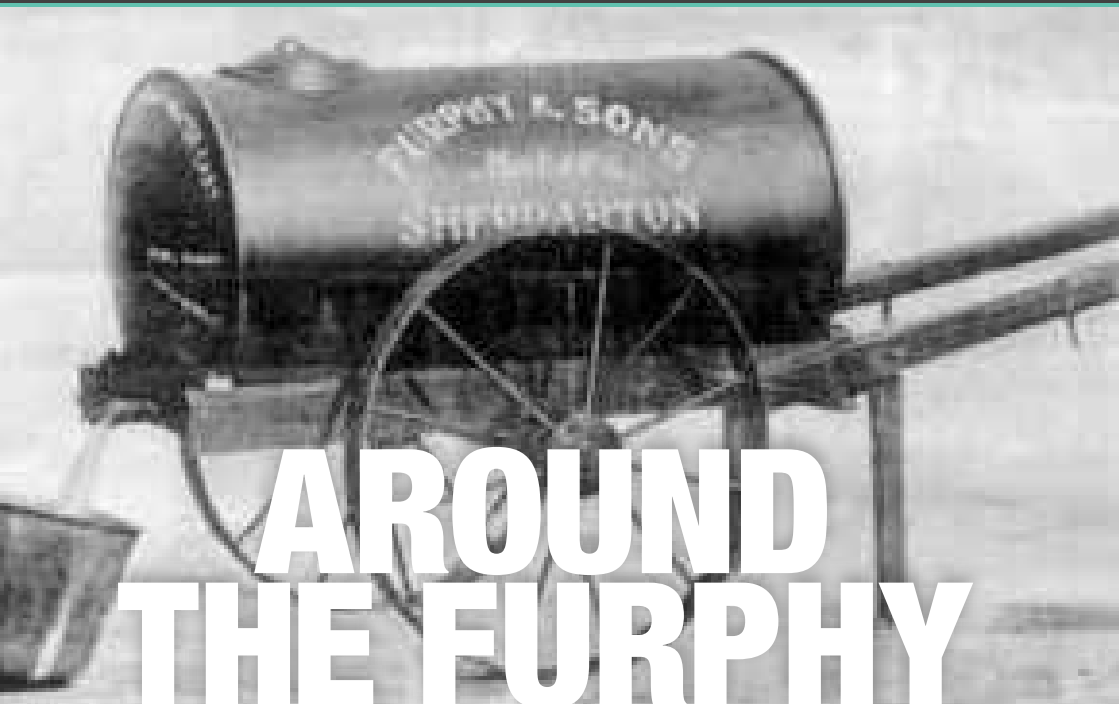
A/A S/L Tng Bn AWAS November 2015



LEST WE FORGET

*When someone you love becomes a memory,
Our memory becomes a Treasure.*





AROUND THE FURPHY

Victory Day (VE Day)

Last year (2015) Europe remembered the 70th Anniversary of the defeat of Nazi Germany in May of 1945. The celebrations appeared to be sombre as the world recognised the threat of terrorism from extremists every single day.

VJ Day/VP Day — 15th AUGUST 1945 —

It is 71 years this year since the war in the Pacific area ended with the official signing of surrender by the Japanese on the 15th August 1945. This date is significant as it marks the end of hostilities with General MacArthur accepting the Japanese capitulation. So let's reflect on that early morning in August through the words of the Australian Prime Minister, Ben Chifley to his fellow Australians.

Part of Mr Chifley's broadcast reads.

Fellow Citizens,

The war is over.

The Japanese Government has accepted the terms of surrender imposed by the Allied nations and hostilities will now cease. At this moment let us offer thanks to God.

Let us remember those whose lives were given that we may enjoy this glorious moment and look forward to the peace which they have won for us.

Let us remember those whose thoughts with proud sorrow turn towards gallant loved ones who will not come back.

Mr Chifley then formally gave the signal for Australia to join in the celebrations of VP Day. It was noted that the remainder of the day and the following day was declared a public holiday.

Where were you on VP Day?

Morotai

A WAS Association Secretary, Cheryle (Howes) Brown recalls her late mother Ella (Forsayeth) Howes (Australian Army Medical Women's Service) reflecting on the signing of the surrender document on the 8th September 1945 at Morotai.

As the war was in its concluding stages AAMWS members were posted to New Britain, Bougainville, Hollandia, Morotai and then to Japan. Cheryle's family have a copy of the terms of surrender distributed to the Japanese at that time. Ella's posting was to the 2/9th AGH, Morotai.



Ella Forsayeth

Japan's Prime Minister Jeered

The Japanese Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe, was heckled and jeered at a ceremony in Okinawa that marked the 70th Anniversary of the end of one of the most horrendous battles of the Pacific during World War 2. The local population consider they have carried the burden of US presence for long enough. However Mr Abe responded by saying Japan had enjoyed the dividend of peace following the horrors of war.

Locals were heard to openly cry out "Go home!" as the Prime Minister attempted to address the crowd. Locals have never forgotten the bombings and the aftermath of defeat.

It was revealed that 100,000 Okinawans and 80,000 Japanese troops were killed in the 82 day battle. American losses were heavy with more than 12,000 soldiers KIA. It was apparent to all that the Japanese would fight to the death for their country.

The Atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki plus the Soviet invasion of Manchuria possibly forced Japan to surrender less than two months after the fighting on Okinawa.

Pearl Harbour

— 7th DECEMBER 1941 —



It is 75 years this year since the bombing of Pearl Harbour by the Imperial Japanese Navy. The bombing killed more than 2,300 Americans as the attack came with no warning or declaration of war. The American Naval Base in the Pacific was attacked from the air and masterminded by the Commander in Chief of the combined Japanese fleet, Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto.

It is said that if the US fleet could be crippled then Japan would have an easy run at taking the Philippines, Malaya, Hong Kong and the Dutch East Indies. How did the Americans miss the warnings, was there incompetence and perhaps dereliction of duty?

We do know the Commander in Chief of the US Fleet Admiral Husband Kimmel and Lt General Short were relieved of their commands nine days after the attack.

Nazi Train Loot



Following a deathbed confession by a man who is said to have been present at the time hiding plundered treasure, has helped reveal its location. The train he said would be found in sealed up tunnels in Poland. The Nazis once used the trains as they carved out subterranean tunnels, to be used as arms factories. It was thought the loot may consist of gold, jewellery, art treasures, military equipment and artefact's.

Modern technology assisted the treasure hunters with photographs taken using ground penetrating radar. Alas, there was no treasure to be found this time.

It would be of some comfort to the descendants of the original owners to have their loved ones property returned.

Never Too Old!

A court in Kiel (Germany) is to decide if a 91 year old woman who worked as a telegraph operator in Auschwitz will go to trial. She has been accused of complicity in the murders of at least 260,000 Jews during World War 2.

It has already been established she will be tried in a court for minors as she was less than 21 years old when the alleged offences were committed. The woman is accused in connection to events between April and July 1944.

Jean (Grenda) Parry

It was wonderful to read the Saturday Age story dated 15th August 2015 regarding the much loved and respected former VAD member, Jean Parry.

It is an honour to know Jean as her story is one of courage over adversity and sincerely thank the Age for acknowledging a truly great Australian.



Cheers to our dear friend Margaret Hattersley (WRANS Association) for alerting us to the article. — Ed.

Our ANZAC Nurses: Service and Sacrifice

COMMEMORATIVE EXHIBITION

29th October 2015 – 30th January 2016

Well done to the Monash Medical Centre
for their excellent exhibition commemorating
Nurses from the Melbourne Homeopathic Hospital
and the Queen Victoria Hospital
who served in WW1.

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From the WRAAC President

Dear Members,

I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a Happy New Year.

I would like to thank the WRAAC Committee for all the help I was given last year and to let everyone know that Margaret Brown is back on our committee as Secretary, we welcome her on board again and thank Diane Sherry for service as Secretary, well done Diane.

This year as we celebrate a few milestones as our own WRAAC 65th Anniversary and the AWAS 75th Anniversary, we will also remember the 50th Anniversary of Long Tan.



WRAAC 65th Anniversary starts in Canberra on the 12th of February and goes all weekend which I am looking forward to with the other Victorian girls that are going. We will also be holding the AWAS / WRAAC Shrine Service again this year and we are hoping for a wonderful day, it's always good to catch up with the ladies.

Please keep in mind it is our 65th Anniversary so if you are able to walk to the Shrine of Remembrance on ANZAC Day we would love a big turnout, Reserve Forces Day will be the 3rd of July, also our Luncheon this year will be on the 23rd of July, it is always a fun day.

I thank all the members that have sent correspondence for our Journal it is always fantastic to hear from members.

Yours in friendship,

Margaret (Robinson) Jager

WRAAC 65th Anniversary

WRAAC 65th ANNIVERSARY CANBERRA

12th – 15th February 2016

To the girls travelling to Canberra in February,
have a great time and keep safe.

We look forward to hearing all about it on your return.

AWAS/WRAAC Communication Book

Jean (Young) Evans (Canteens)

*Our best wishes to you Jean and to let you
know you are always in our thoughts.*

Betty (Hurtig) Davies (ASWG HWG)

*To our dear friend Betty, we often think of you
and your significant contribution to the Association.*

Sue (Brown) Logan (3 WRAAC Training)

*Hello to Sue in sunny Queensland,
keep up the good work regarding your travel plans. Impressive!*

Lorraine Jacobs (Catering)

Best wishes to Lorraine in Perth, hope to see you in 2016.

Kathleen (Kate) Doran.

*Best wishes to you Kate and thank you for your
ongoing interest in the Associations.*

Nance Ormsby (AWLA)

*Hello to Nance and the Girls, keep up the good work,
we will look out for you on ANZAC Day 2016.*

Baby News



*Congratulations to Phoebe (Clay) Parker (Sigs)
on the arrival of a beautiful Great Granddaughter,
Madeline Phoebe on the 4th November 2015.
Welcome to the world Miss Maddy Phoebe.*



Reserve Forces Day

*The 100th Anniversary of the raising of the 3rd Division
and Appointment of MAJ GEN John Monash as Commander*

SUNDAY 3rd JULY

Shrine of Remembrance — Melbourne

PARADE/COMMEMORATIVE SERVICE

Commences at 10:00AM

The Honourable Tim Fisher AC, Former Deputy Prime Minister
and National Chairman of the RFD Council of Australia will be host for
the Parade/Commemorative Service at the Shrine of Remembrance.

Cockatoo Rise



Following a recent phone call from Greg to the Association requesting WRAAC memorabilia and uniforms I decided to visit Cockatoo Rise the next time we were at Metung, East Gippsland. Greg relayed to me over the phone about the retreat and war museum situated within the tranquil, semi alpine bushland. It is picture perfect, with the environment so essential to the healing of body and soul.

Greg and Annie have achieved a long held dream to create a peaceful environment for Service personnel and their partners to enjoy the camaraderie and support only your mates at times can provide.

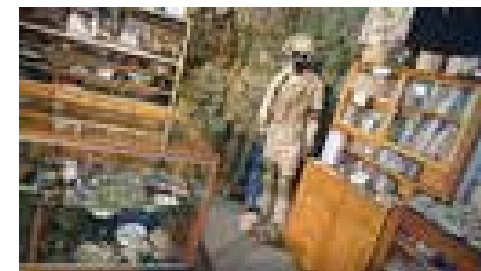
— Editor

Cockatoo Rise Retreat War Museum

575 Great Alpine Road, Sarsfield Victoria

We provide a free retreat facility for war veterans and their partners to stay and share time with each other and their mates. Cockatoo Rise is situated on a property 6kms from Bairnsdale in the Gippsland Lakes, Victoria. We have a collection of war memorabilia from WW1 to present day conflicts in Afghanistan. Our museum was officially opened by Darren Chester MP on the 22nd March 2015.

Cockatoo Rise is a voluntary retreat, run by Greg (ex-Vietnam vet) and Annie. The museum displays uniforms and equipment used by troops over the years. It gives visitors the opportunity to try on webbing and uniforms used in present and past conflicts. The museum is open by appointment 7 days a week to anybody who wishes to visit.



Donations of any war memorabilia are always gratefully accepted. School and other groups always welcome.

Opening Hours – **By Appointment**

Entry Fee – **By Donation**

Telephone – **0409 418 332**

*Thank you to Greg and the
Cockatoo Rise Website.*



AROUND THE WRAAC PACK

Celebrity Couple Caught Again

Heather (Rankin) and Hugh Fry recently enjoyed a much needed break touring Australia. However, we did notice an article in the October 2015 Royal Auto Magazine featuring the laid back couple enjoying a welcome coffee break prior to setting off to their favourite resort at Cobram Victoria.

When we approached Heather and Hugh for an in-depth interview, they politely declined our request suggesting we get in the queue. We believe a major sponsorship deal is in the wind!



30 WRAAC Barrack, Mount Martha House

The Association has been contacted by Gill Gordon, Manager of History at Mount Martha House seeking assistance regarding this beautiful building and hoping our members can help.

Gill is looking for photos and any memorabilia you may have regarding the time you lived there. Your stories can be recorded and used as part of a visual display, remembering Mt Martha House is an important part of the history of the Mornington Peninsula. Lynette (Lyn) Board and Doreen Smith have been assisting Gill and would really appreciate your input.

Gill Gordon would be happy to meet with anyone to record their memories on an iPad video which could later be transcribed.



The project is now under the Mornington Historical Society and supported by the Mornington Peninsula Shire.

Contact details

Gill Gordon

Mt Martha Historical Collection
C/- 9 McLeod Road Mt Martha
Victoria 3934

Phone/Fax: 03 5974 1288
ggordon@bigpond.net.au



VALE

Captain Linda Ruth Durance-Sloss — F31831 —

5th APRIL 1927 – 12th AUGUST 2015

The WRAAC Association Victoria mourns the passing of Ruth Durance-Sloss, a truly inspirational leader who encouraged, mentored and always led by example. The passing of Captain Ruth Durance is another closing chapter in the proud history of the Women's Royal Australian Army Corps.

Ruth's Military story began in March 1958, when a young Linda Ruth Durance enlisted into the WRAAC CMF, 8 WRAAC Co Kew. Ruth was a teacher in civilian life and would have been an obvious choice for an Admin/training role.

During recruit training, it was revealed that Ruth was full of fun and joined in the many concerts and revues, always held at the end of camps and bivouacs. It was a fun time for the girls who were more than able to take on the responsibility of leadership in the years that followed. Recruits joining Ruth during that era were the late Lt Colonel Bev (Wilcock) Blanksby, Margaret (Sampson) Roberts, June Gilbert and WO1 Elizabeth Gibson. Ruth was promoted through the ranks and in 1973 was appointed Admin Command 3 WRAAC Co and in 1974 promoted from T/Captain to Captain.



In 1976 when WRAAC CMF/ARES disbanded members were posted to the various Units. Ruth's posting was to 3 Electrical Mechanical Engineers Service Unit until her retirement.

The common thread that weaves throughout Ruth's Army career is one of respect and her genuine compassion for all. Her girls tell me they always wanted to do their very best for Ruth.

WRAAC Association President Margaret (Robinson) Jager designed and made the floral tributes that featured a significant red theme throughout, this was in tribute to Ruth who wore a red dress on her marriage to John.

Our thoughts and prayers are with John and to Ruth's family.

Rest in peace dear Ruth.

Lest we forget



A Woman Who Has Achieved Success

A woman has achieved success
Who has lived well, laughed often and loved much;
Who has gained the respect of intelligent men and women
and the love of little children;
Who has filled her niche and accomplished her task,
Who has left the world better than she found it
Whether by an improved poppy, a perfect poem or a rescued soul;
Who has never lacked appreciation of Earth's beauties;
Nor failed to express it;
Who has always looked for the best in others
And given the best she had;
Whose life is an inspiration;
Whose memory a benediction.

...

Robert Louis Stevenson (1850–1894)

*This beautiful poem was read by a member
of Ruth's family at her service. — Ed.*



Sick Parade

To all our members who are not feeling well at this time
our thoughts and prayers are with you.

*If you wish to have a chat please do not hesitate to contact a committee
member or our Chaplain Rev. William (Bill) Pugh — Editor*

Can You Help

We have lost contact with some of our life members.

Can you help us to locate the following members?

Cpl Dorothy Berry	—	Ms Shirley Brown
Ms Marilyn Dell	—	Miss Joanne Doolan
Lt Evelyn Howarth	—	Ms Pamela Hunt (nee Walsh)
Ms Angela Jones	—	Mrs Joyce Payne
Ms Debbie Umpleby	—	Ms. Sallyann Welton

*Please contact Diane Sherry on
telephone: 0408 553 412
email: dishe1946@yahoo.com.au*



Welcome New Members

F32114	Mrs Pamela CULPH	CMF
Nee NEWTON		1967-70 3 WRAAC Co
Life Member		126 Sig Sqn
F363372	Ms Debra DOWNIE	CMF/ARES
		1975-76 3 WRAAC Co
Life Member		15 Tpt Sqn & MUR
		ARA
		1976-85 WRAAC School
		School of Sigs
		RACT Centre
		BTU & TTU
F15700	Ms Linda VERBEEK VAN DER SANDE	ARA
		1973-77 WRAAC School
Life Member		Dvr Trg Randwick
		BTU & TTU
VF515495	Ms Patsy (Pat) NEVILL	AWAS
		AEME 1 AVP
Annual Member		
F321418	Mrs Karen MARTIN	ARA
		1978-86 WRAAC School
Annual Member		HQ Log Comd Melbourne
		51 Sup Bn WA
		21 Sup Bn NSW

WRAAC MEMBERSHIP

We would like you to contact any ladies whom you may know who were in the Army (ARA, CMF/ARes) regarding joining the Association.

Please contact our Membership Officer Diane Sherry
on **0408 553 412** or email **dishe1946@yahoo.com.au**
and she will post out the appropriate form.