



Australian Women's
Army Service 1941-1947



Women's Royal Australian
Army Corps 1951-1984

AWAS WRAAC JOURNAL

NOV 19

WRAAC Association (Vic) Inc.

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From the Editor

Dear members,

Welcome to our last Journal for 2019 and once again thank you for your feedback and continued interest in our articles.

In this edition we have some good news regarding "Bill the Bastard" and the quest to bronze his statue.

We also have another member, Jill Doyle, who participated in the 1958 Southern Command Tattoo and Jill has sent us her recollections of the event.

The July luncheon was a great success with over 90 members and guests in attendance and we hope you enjoy the photos we have of the day.

If you have a story or article to share, we would really appreciate your input.

We wish you all a happy and safe Christmas and New Year.

Yours in friendship,

Jude Pinkerton-Treloar OAM

Please Help:

The WRAAC Association has been approached by Mrs Ella Burton, daughter of our much-loved member, the late Cheryle Brown, for any photos or stories you may have of her mother during her many years of Army service.

Ella is putting together a book of memories for Cheryle's grandchildren and would really appreciate your help.

Please contact the Association for further details.

Jude Pinkerton-Treloar OAM



March 2020 Journal Deadline

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

FRIDAY 7TH FEBRUARY 2020

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

Editor AWAS/WRAAC Journal

Postal Address:
87 Westmelton Drive,
Melton West, VIC. 3337

E-mail:
johntreloar1@bigpond.com

2019 - 2020 Calendar of Events

DATE	EVENT
NOVEMBER 2019	
Saturday 30th	Christmas Lunch Duckboard Function Centre Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital 11:30am
FEBRUARY 2020	
Saturday 8th	WRAAC Social Group lunch Highett RSL, 12 noon

SANDAKAN COMMEMORATIVE SERVICE 2020

Service to be held at Strathdale Park, Crook Street, Strathdale at 11am.

The Bendigo District RSL Sub-Branch Inc. with the Post 1975 Veterans Central Victoria Group officiating, will conduct its Annual Sandakan Commemorative Service on Sunday 8th March 2020 at 11:00 am. This will be held at the Bendigo Sandakan Memorial in Strathdale Park, just off Mcivor Road, Bendigo.

Further details can be obtained from the website below:

www.bendigorsl.com.au/activities/sandakan-commemorative-service/

From the WRAAC President



Dear Members,

Welcome to your Christmas edition of the WRAAC/AWAS journal for 2019 and hope this finds you well as the New Year approaches.

As I write this forward, we have just celebrated our 43rd luncheon held at the Brighton Savoy. It was another wonderful day catching up with old and new friends. This

year we had 93 in attendance including eight wonderful AWAS, we are so proud of our AWAS girls and how well they all look.

Phoebe Parker celebrated her 100th birthday on the 30th September 2019 with Margaret Prowse celebrating her 99th birthday on the 13th July 2019.

It was wonderful to see our Navy girls joining us as we always enjoy their company.

Your Committee has arranged for a Christmas Luncheon to be held at the Austin Hospital Function Room on Saturday the 30th November 2019 and we look forward to seeing you there for some pre-Christmas cheer.

As usual, your Committee has worked hard during the year, some of their efforts include. The Annual Luncheon, Social Group lunches, attendances at ceremonial events, ANZAC Day Ceremonial March and events, the Journal, connecting with external groups (Killara Primary School and Ward 17 Austin Health (dedicated to the ongoing health and well-being of the Veteran community)

In recent times we have welcomed a number of new members to the Association and we hope they are enjoying their time with us.

As difficult as it is to admit we are not getting any younger and current Committee members

won't be there forever(fact).

Newer and (older members} we would encourage you to put your hand up for a position on the Committee.

Stay safe and well and enjoy Christmas and New Year.

Yours in friendship,

Carol (Hamilton) King

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.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

QF141774 - Mrs. Joan (Mead) Walters AWAS
F35336 - Miss Merelyn McCarthy ARA
F323787 - Mrs. Ruth (Oberegger) Ogden ARA
8557604 - Miss Rebecca Stephen ARes
8268585 - Ms. Cindy Marret ARes
F325826 - Mrs. Susan (McCarthy) Weeks ARA
VF345498 - Mrs. Janet (McLennan) McDonald AWAS

Annual Membership for 2019 / 2020 membership year are now due.

If you are an Annual Member and have not paid your fees yet;
please do so as soon as possible.

If you have any membership queries,
or are unsure whether your membership is paid,
please contact our Membership Officer.



WRAAC ASSOCIATION (VIC) INCORPORATED



Certificate of Incorporation No.: A0051572X

PRESIDENT: Carol King
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:

FOR MEMBERS

VETERANS CARD PASSED IN PARLIAMENT

This is edited version of the letter from the DVA Secretary.

I would like to thank you for your ongoing commitment and support to ensuring veterans and their families receive the recognition and respect they deserve for their service and sacrifice to our country.

I am pleased to let you know that the Government's Australian Veterans' Recognition (Putting Veterans and their Families First) Bill 2019 has passed Federal Parliament today.

This legislation formally establishes the Australian Defence Veterans' Covenant which includes an oath, lapel pin and Veteran Card which are available for veterans and eligible reservists.

With the passing of this legislation we will now start to send out the lapel pins and oath to those who have already registered via mail in the coming weeks.

The new Veteran Card, which is a redesign of the existing DVA health cards, continues to provide access to

treatments and benefits and will soon provide access to thousands of offers from businesses across Australia as a part of a new benefits program.

We are expecting to launch the benefits program very soon and will be sending information packs in the mail to Ex-Service Organisations and RSL Sub-branches which includes promotional material and a set of frequently asked questions to help you support veterans to ensure they get the most out of the program.

Veterans and reservists can continue to register for the Covenant online through MyService, by calling DVA on 1800 555 254, or by visiting your local Veterans Access Network office.

For more information about the Covenant, please visit <https://www.dva.gov.au/benefits-and-payments/australian-defence-veterans-covenant>

Regards Liz,

*Liz Cosson AM CSC - Secretary
Department of Veterans' Affairs*





SHRINE OF REMEMBRANCE
MELBOURNE

LAST POST SERVICE

ABOUT THE SERVICE

The Last Post Service is a new, weekly, service that aims to engage our visitors in commemoration and to connect them with the importance of service and sacrifice. The Service will occur weekly, on a Sunday, at 4.45pm and will include a wreath laying. The final part of the service, the lowering of the flags to the Last Post, will be at 5pm. It will take place on the Shrine Forecourt in view of the Shrine to allow visitors to reflect on the monument and see activities occurring at the eternal flame and the flagpoles.

We are inviting Veterans and current serving Defence Force Personnel to take part in the service by introducing the wreath laying and reading the Ode.

The first Last Post Service is scheduled on Sunday 10 November and the service will

take place every week after.

Last Post will be at 5pm. It will take place on the Shrine Forecourt in view of the Shrine to allow visitors to reflect on the monument and see activities occurring at the eternal flame and the flagpoles.

We are inviting Veterans and current serving Defence Force Personnel to take part in the service by introducing the wreath laying and reading the Ode.

If you are a Veteran or a current serving Defence Force member and would like take part in our Last Post Service please contact Naias Mingo, Director Visitor Experience, on nmingo@shrine.org.au or 0414 588 403 or Dale Capron, Ceremonial Programs Manager, on dcapron@shrine.org.au or 0423 021 044.

WRAAC 68TH ANNIVERSARY LUNCHEON

Brighton Savoy 20th July 2019



LORRAINE MCDUGALL & PHOEBE PARKER

After a brutally cold week in Melbourne the sun decided to join the party and welcomed members and guests as they arrived at the venue.

This year we were honoured to have former members of the AWAS join us and an opportunity to thank them for their service and valued friendship.

In attendance were, Phoebe Parker (Sigs) Margaret Prowse (ESF Liaison AAPC) Dorothy Holmquest (AACS) Pauline Priestley (5th Aust Mov Control HQ) Shirley Cornish (Q Store Vic Bks) and Gwenda Walker (1Aust BOD & 3 WRAAC Coy)

We also acknowledged two special birthdays with Phoebe



DOROTHY HOLMQUEST, MARGARET PROWSE & MARGARET RODD



JUDE PINKERTON-TRELOAR, ROBERT & DIANE WINTHER

Parker celebrating her 100th birthday and Margaret Prowse celebrating her 99th birthday.

Congratulations to both our birthday girls.

Our Guest Speaker, Mr. Robert Winther accompanied by his wife Dianne, talked about Austin Health and the work undertaken by the hospital on behalf of the Veteran Community and Ward 17. Robert explained Ward 17 also cares for

our first responders (Police and Emergency workers in their time of need) and the great work undertaken at the Repat.

We all left the venue with a greater understanding of the care and values of this great Hospital.

We look forward to seeing you all again next year.

The committee has found a new venue, details to follow in next issue!



RUTH & RON SMITH



REV. BILL & LESLEY PUGH



ROBERT WINTHER



AMY JAGER, ELLA BURTON, TEGAN PINKERTON & EMMA JAGER-WILLEY



JAN RAFFERTY, IRENE LAKEMAN, MARGARET BROWN & GAYLE FULLER

AUSTIN HEALTH

*Vietnam Veterans Day Observance
16th August 2019*



Several hundred former veterans joined family and friends in the Acacia room at the Repat to remember those we have lost.

The replica Long Tan cross reminds us of the loss of so many lives.

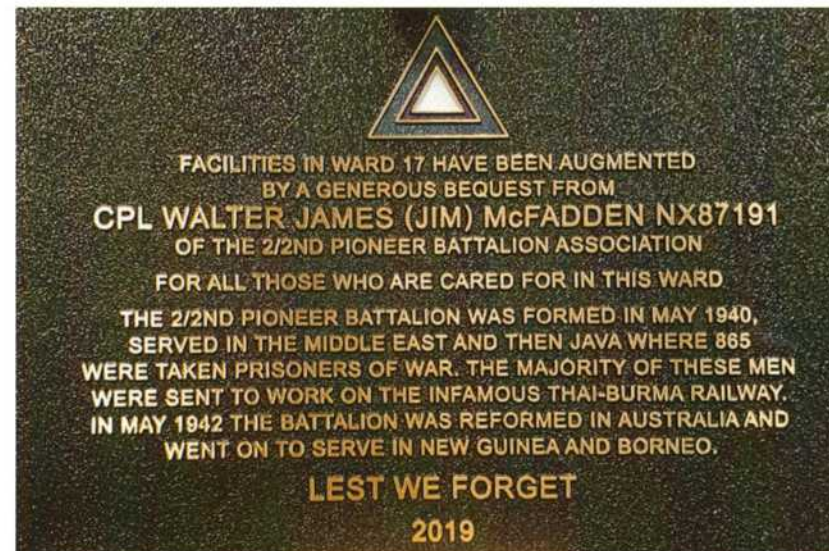
We also witnessed the unveiling of a plaque that reads:

Facilities in ward 17 have been augmented by a generous bequest from CPL Walter James (Jim)

McFadden of the 2/2nd Pioneer Battalion Association

For all those who are cared for in this ward

The 2/2nd Pioneer Battalion was formed in May 1940, served in the Middle East and then Java where 885 were taken prisoners of war. The majority of these men were sent to work on the infamous Thai -Burma Railway. In 1942 the Battalion was reformed in Australia and went on to serve in New Guinea and Borneo.



LEST WE FORGET 2019

A white wreath will be placed every year in remembrance of those who could not face life pressures - may they find peace.



HEATHER (RANKIN) FRY PLACED A WREATH IN MEMORY OF CMF/ RESERVE FORCES

FOLLOW UP ON BILL THE BASTARD

The good news is that Bill is across the line with full funding achieved.

This is wonderful news to all who donated so generously to have Bill cast in bronze.

The unveiling is yet to be determined but it is hoped to be Saturday the 8th August 2020 to coincide with the anniversary of the Battle of Romani.

Bill's statue will be transported to Harden-Murrumburrah and mounted in its final resting place within the Murrumburrah Memorial Precinct.

Harden-Murrumburrah is located 338 km south-west of Sydney and 49 km north-west of the Hume Highway via Burley Griffin Way.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

If you or a loved one are suffering in silence, please take the time to consider an approach to your Medical Practitioner and/ or contact the Mental Health Service at the Repat.

contact for information, assessment and referral for mental health is 24-hours a day , 7 days a week.

North East Triage Service

Phone 1300 859 789

Referrals to Mental Health

For individuals experiencing a mental health issue or who might be concerned about someone with whom they live , work or to whom they provide care , North East Triage Service is the initial point of

OPEN ARMS (Veteran and Families Counselling)

To get support or find out more

1800 011 046

www.OpenArms.gov.au

WRAAC ASSOCIATION COMMUNITY REPORT

KEEPING THE ANZAC MEMORY ALIVE



SARAH, KELLI & ROBYN; TEACHERS AT KILLARA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Killara Primary School in Sunbury has a long-standing tradition of commemorating ANZAC Day with a whole school ANZAC assembly which is scripted similar to a traditional ANZAC ceremony with explanations of the importance of each section along the way. They show videos, their choir sings

songs to honour those who served and those who continue to serve. They display ANZAC memorabilia, and students make and lay wreaths as a sign of respect.

ANZAC DAY 2018 was always going to be different thanks to one of our teachers. Sarah Round, who



grew up with stories of the war from her grandpa, started planning this event after returning from Gallipoli in 2015. She was determined to create something that our school could look upon and learn from for many years to come. She researched the Victorian Government and Victorian Veterans Council's ANZAC Centenary Community Grant Program, put a small team together and started consulting with student leadership and our school community. A design was agreed upon, quotes were sought and an application for a grant for Killara's ANZAC memorial garden and mural was submitted in June 2017. The original proposal, worth more than \$20,000.00, was not successful

and the team was back looking for another way to make this dream a reality. Late 2017 we received a part grant and the team were off again, albeit on a smaller scale and with some unwanted problems set to come their way. During Term 1, 2018, a commemorative Ode memorial and steel bench, 2 life-size soldiers and 3D poppies were ordered. During Term 1 we fielded a host of 'blocks', from a change in site to a lack of 'hands' available to prepare the area. Nothing was going to deter the team from their ultimate goal; an ANZAC Day unveiling. The sheer tenacity of the team shone through; nothing was going to stop this juggernaut! By the term holidays all was ready for the 7m x 3m mural

depicting the WWI battle of Lone Pine to be painted. In week 1 of Term 2 it all came together, the ode memorial, seat, soldiers, crosses and poppies were installed. Students were intrigued, excited and respectful of the site as it unfolded before their eyes. They could be heard discussing family members who are currently serving or those who had served in previous conflicts. The conversations that ensued with their friends were moving; who knew so many within our school community had connections to ANZAC.

Our unveiling on April 24 was magnificent; we had representation from the RSL, WRAAC, AWAS, local air league cadets, a bagpiper, Local MP Josh Bull, parents, student and school leaders. Speeches were made and the plaque was blessed. Following the unveiling our ANZAC whole school assembly was held with special readings by student leadership and a very special Remembrance Day Poem read by students and their mothers.

A roster was created, and classes visited the memorial and followed up with further learning in their classes. There are so many areas of the curriculum that can be

linked to this memorial, especially History: community, remembrance and celebrations and historical significance. We also ran a whole school ANZAC writing competition where all entries were turned into a book for our library and shared with our school community and visitors who attended the unveiling of the memorial garden.

Later in 2018, poppies were painted by students on the east wall and rosemary was planted in the garden bed. The blessed plaques donated by the WRAAC and AWAS and a silhouette of a soldier were also mounted above this area.

We look forward to showing and educating generations of students to come, the story of the ANZACs.



SASSENNACH

8 WRAAC COY 1956 FIRST EDITION



When five crazy, mixed-up kids are literally snatched from the bosoms of their respective families, flung together in a barracks for fourteen days and deprived of all the comforts of civvy life, anything can result.

Five such types, having been in the CMF for roughly five minutes, recently spent their first camp at 30 WRAAC Barracks, Mount Martha, and are therefore a little 'camp-happy', so we beg forgiveness for any monotony of theme in the following items of literature.

Most of the articles come from the recruits themselves but by reading between the lines you'll be able to detect the ones that come from those women of steel, those hard-hearted

amazons, those furrow-browed, clenched-fisted, raucous-voiced, whiplash-tongued NCO's.

Who was it said: -

"A corporal is a woman who knows much about little and daily learns more and more about less and less, until finally she knows everything about nothing ●●● then they make her a SERGEANT, "

Well, whoever it was, there you have it in a nutshell, just quietly, we'd say it sounds like a lot of very 'famous last words'.

We are eternally grateful to the wonderful women of 8WRAAC Company for their wit and courage to write about their era and time in the WRAAC CMF.

It wasn't about hurt feelings and failure

It was fun and enlightens us about the freedom of a post war Australian female who could serve her country, attend Camps and Bivouacs with a sense of pride and achievement.

I treasure each copy of Sassenach and thank the late Major Jessie Perkins MBE entrusting them to our care.

Ed

1958 SOUTHERN COMMAND MILITARY TATTOO

Memories shared by Jill (Ralph) Doyle

Jill writes,

A lot may have been forgotten but it was great fun.

I remember we had rehearsals over four (4) nights before the three (3) actual performances.

At the end of the week our shoes were ruined as it had rained a great deal of the time and we were on the arena where cattle and horses had been the month before for the Royal Melbourne Show.



"---And I sez to the sergeant, 'I sez who do ya think you're talkin' to' I sez...."

In charge of us was Captain Rawlings, who we all thought was wonderful. I do remember our marching was 'Choreographed'

The WRAAC Girls carried small torches covered with orange cellophane and the RAANC girls had torches with green cellophane.

On the darkened arena it probably was quite effective. I remember we marched to the old march 'Namur'

We wouldn't have missed it for quids!

Book Review

THE LOST BATTALIONS
BY TOM GILLING

Allen & Unwin

Tom Gilling writes a compelling history of young Australians sent off to war and then to suffer under the Japanese as a POW.

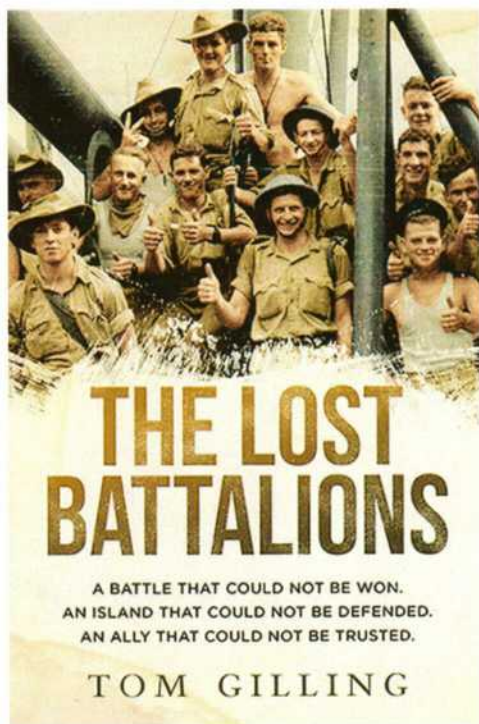
This is a book for all interested in our Military history and an accurate account of what went on following the fall of Singapore.

I purchased my copy at Australia Post shop. Ed

Back cover reads;

They were thrown into a hopeless fight against an overwhelming enemy. Later, hundreds died as prisoners of war on the Thai-Burma Railway and in the freezing coal mines of Taiwan and Japan. Through it all, wrote Weary Dunlop, they showed 'fortitude beyond anything I could have believed possible'.

Until now, the story of the 2000 diggers marooned on Java in February 1942 has been a footnote to the fall of Singapore and the bloody campaign in New Guinea. Led by an Adelaide lawyer, Brigadier Arthur Blackburn VC, and fighting



with scrounged weapons, two Australian battalions - plus an assortment of cooks, laundrymen and deserters from Singapore - held up the might of the Imperial Japanese Army until ordered by their Dutch allies to surrender.

Drawing on personal diaries, official records and interviews with two of the last living survivors, this book tells the extraordinary story of the 'lads from Java', who laid down their weapons, but refused to give in.

Jude Pinkerton-Treloar



VALE



F32255 Pte Angela (Nardella) Smith

12th February 1951 - 31st July 2019

Angela is remembered with great affection and her sense of fun and laughter will forever stay with her fellow servicewomen.

Rest in peace Angela.

The WRAAC Association mourns the passing of Angela and sincere condolences are extended to her family at this sad time.

Members formed a guard of honour to say a final farewell to a much-loved member.

Margie Jager served with Angela and her twin sister Luise writes this tribute.



Angela (Nardella) Smith
F32255

Angela joined 3 WRAAC Coy Kew on the 23rd May 1971 and on completion of recruit training began her Army service at 3 Catering Training where she was the life of the party and always leader of the pack.

Where there as trouble there was Angela!

I have so many memories of that time, some can be printed but others can't.

Liz Salmon recalls a recruit course at the School of Army Health, Healesville where she planned to show a training film, but the projector was out of action and Liz asked her recruits if anyone could sing or tell jokes to fill in the time.

Angela stood up and entertained all with her amazing stage craft skills, a born entertainer

Margie recalls going on a march all dressed in our sports uniform, charging up a hill when one of the Instructors decided to turn herself around and go backwards but after a few steps promptly fell into a prickly bush. Angela was in the back of the line and saw what had happened and yelled "double time" so away we went.

When we arrived back at camp the Instructor called Angela out demanding to know why she called double time!

Angela simply replied "I didn't want the girls to see you in pain!"

By the way, a couple of Instructors did get her out of the prickly bush with a sore rump for her trouble!

Another legendary story Margie can recall is a camp at Eppalock when a Senior Officer, impressed by the Catering skills of the girls is invited by the "Cooks" to attend their graduation.

However, protocol was not adhered to and the relevant Officers were not advised of the invitation and therefore compromising all.

The late W02 Cheryl Brown would say "Bloody Cooks" always in trouble!

Margie recalls, because we didn't tell anyone he was coming that meant trouble because the reviewing Officer was of a lower rank and when asked who issued the invitation, Angela's name came up!

Margie continues,

Following Recruit Graduation Parade a group of about nine of us were invited back to a Senior Officers home to celebrate the occasion.



Angela said to the Officer where do you keep your uniforms and the reply was "upstairs" After a while Angela emerged wearing the Officers cap and jacket, singing and dancing away. We were all in fits of laughter as Angela took centre stage.

Suddenly the doorbell rang, and Angela inquired 'are we expecting anyone else' we all shook our heads, no!

Angela answered the door, still dressed in an Officers hat and jacket only to find a Senior female Officer standing at the door. Angela promptly slammed the door shut on the Officer and raced upstairs yelling to us to get the door.

When Angela came downstairs again, she faced the Snr Female

Officer with a smile and said "Oh when did you arrive?"

The Officer answered with a wry smile, someone just slammed a door in my face, but I will find out who it was!

Angela replied, "I apologise for the person who closed the door on you as they are too embarrassed, and I won't shame them".

The Officer replied, "thank you Angela and tell her I don't want to see it happen again".

"I will", replied Angela.

There are so many stories about Angela and her adventures that made our time in the WRAAC so much fun.

Rest in Peace Angela.



Nance (Trewick) Dawson
VF395742 AWAS

25 March 1922 - 24 July 2019

Sgt. 2ND Eschelon AWAS

A member of Tongala RSL Sub-branch

Our sincere sympathies are extended to friends and family of Nance.



SSgt Lance Uston Phillips 18936

27 December 1949 - 22 September 2019

It is with great sadness we report the passing of Lance Phillips, much loved husband of Association member, Pam Phillips.

Lance, a former Army Apprentice who served two terms in Vietnam was indeed a great Australian.

When Lance retired from the Army, he joined the CFA and became an

active member in his community.

With Pam at his side they were involved with the Berwick RSL fundraising activities and always there to help a fellow Veteran.

Our sincere condolences to Pam, Craig and Ashley, family and friends at this sad time.



LAURIE TOPPINEN
216476



Maralyn writes,

Laurie joined the army 7th July 1965. He did his recruit training at Wagga Wagga then proceeded to do corps training at Singleton with Royal Australian Engineers. From there he was stationed to 30 Terminal SQN Middlehead where we met as I was stationed at the WRAAC school!

We married in 1969 and Laurie was deployed to Vietnam in 1970 with the 17th Construction Squadron arriving home safely from there in 1971 he was reposted to 30 Terminal. Working with CMF crews of a weekend, training them in heavy plant equipment etc....

Laurie served until 7 July 1977 when we returned to my hometown of Swan Hill and he became an orderly at the hospital. After 15 years in Swan Hill we moved to Queensland for 10 years or so when we realised, we were missing our Grandchildren grow up. We then moved back to Swan Hill – Laurie was on a TPI pension by then. He was not in the best of health for the last few years however made the most of life where he succumbed to throat cancer last year. Laurie passed away 6th September this year.

Our sincere condolences to Maralyn and family at this sad time. Ed



CHRISTINA ROBYN (VINCENT) GIBSON



F18188

9th October 1944 - 28th September 2019

It is with great sadness we report the passing of F18188 WO2 Christina Robyn Gibson (known as Robyn) on the 28th September 2019.

Category of service:

Australian Regular Army Special Reserve
— 21 August 1963 to 29 November 1965

Army Reserve — 10 September
1975 to 06 June 1989

Employment:

Clerk, Administrative Assistant

Postings:

WRAAC School — 21 August 1963

Headquarters Southern
Command — 27 April 1964

Northern Command Personnel
Depot — 05 November 1965

3 Women's Royal Australian Army Corps
Company — 10 September 1975

4/19 Prince of Wales Light Horse
— 05 December 1975

Attachments:

Headquarters 3 Division — 27
September 1963 to April 1964



Robyn was a valued member of our Sub-committee and a great supporter of the Association.

Our sincere condolences to Robyn's husband Ken, sons Grant, Stephen and Scott, family and friends.

A true and faithful Soldier of the Queen.

Rest in peace dear Robyn.

WRAAC Association members attended Robyn's service on behalf of all members.

Margaret Jager also represented 4/19 Prince of Wales Light Horse



RONALD FREDERICK BROWN - 3170681



21 April 1942 to 11 October 2019



It is with great sadness we report the passing of WO1 Ronald (Ron) Brown on the 11th October 2019 following a long illness.

Ron was the widower of the late WO2 Cheryle (Howes) Brown who passed away in 2018.

Ron enlisted in the CMF with 6th Field Ambulance in 1959 aged 17.

He qualified as a mechanic and was promoted Cpl before transferring to 41 Amphibious Platoon in the early 1960s.

Ron found his Military calling, first with DUKW and then LARCs becoming an authority on Amphibious Operations.

He was promoted to Platoon

Sergeant. On RAASC becoming RACT the Platoon became part of Melbourne Water Transport Unit in 1977.

He served with MWTU until the Unit was disbanded in 1986.

Ron was then posted to 3Trg Group and finally a Cadre with the Cadet Corps.

He was promoted to WO2 in August 1982 and to WO1 whilst at the Cadet Corps which was to be his last posting until 1995.

Ron met the love of his life Cheryle (WRAAC) on one of the many promotional courses they both attended, and another husband and wife Military story began.

Our heartfelt condolences to Ron's family and friends at this very sad time.

We extend our respects to Cheryle and Ron's daughter Ella and husband Rob, Grandchildren, William and Jessie.

To Ron's fellow Service mates our thoughts are with you as we too share your sorrow.

Rest in Peace Ron.

On behalf of the WRAAC Association several members attended Ron's service at San Remo.

Our sincere thanks to Bob English for providing us with Ron's service information.

LEST WE FORGET

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

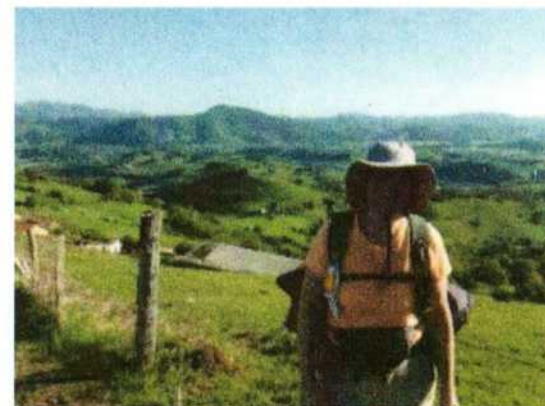
SICK PARADE

To all our members who are not feeling well, 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

TRAVELLING WRAAC

WALKING THE CAMINO DE SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELLA

By Cheryl McInnes



In 2014 I walked my first Camino following a near brush with a potentially very serious health problem.

In 2016 I went back to do it again, this time in conjunction with some promotional aspects for WellWays, an organisation that at the time supported people with mental health challenges. The idea was to bring awareness to the struggles of

people with poor mental health and to get people talking about it and break down the stigma associated with mental health issues.

Both the 2014 and the 2016 Caminos were what is known as the Camino Francais because they start in a beautiful little village called St Jean Pied de Port in the French Pyrenees.



TRAVELLING WRAAC



In June 2019, I went back a third time but this time it was to walk the Camino del Norte as far as Oviedo, and then do the Primitivo believed to be the first Camino to be walked as a pilgrimage, and the first person to undertake this was King Alphonso II of Asturias (now part of Spain after the unification of the regions now known as Spain).

So why do people from all around the world head over to Spain to walk one of the many Caminos which all end up in Santiago de Compostella? Well there are many answers to that, and of course each answer will depend on who you ask. Originally, over a thousand years ago, pilgrims walked to Santiago to pay homage to the bones of St James the Apostle who, history tells us, is interred within the



reliquary in the crypt of the Cathedral in Santiago de Compostella. The history is an interesting one but too long to include in this article but do take a "google tour" if you're interested to find out more.

So originally it was a pilgrimage, and for many people today, it remains a pilgrimage for the same reasons. However, there are those who walk it for more generic 'spiritual' reasons because they've heard that many pilgrims find they undertake a transformation of some kind whilst walking the many kilometres (775

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kms from St Jean Pied de Port on the French Way, and 798 kms on the del Norte/Primitivo route from San Sebastian). There will be many reasons for why 'transformation' occurs, and for some it will be relatively small but important, whilst for others it could be a more significant change in their life which would occur on their return home. After my 2016 Camino, I came home clear that I was going to retire when my work contract was up for renewal in July 2017. For me, it generally became about living a healthier lifestyle and by that, I mean physically and emotionally healthier.

The second one of course was organised for and had a clearly defined 'purpose' but I took with me 7 other people for whom most of them had never walked a Camino before.

The third Camino followed a year that was the worst of my life. I had been diagnosed with breast cancer in October 2017 after having retired in the July of that year. I had surgery and chemotherapy and all of that basically wiped out most of 2018, and I vowed I



would regain my health and fitness and walk the Camino del Norte/Primitivo with a few friends in 2019.

This last Camino was a much tougher one. Not because of my recent health issues, but because it was a mountainous Camino which commenced in San Sebastian in the Basque region of Spain and went along the Coast of the Bay of Biscay before turning inland toward the mountainous region of Asturias and Galicia. It was tough going but with determination and clear line of sight to the objective, it was exciting at the same time.

We stayed in Albergues (like youth hostels, with bunks for sleeping in communal areas) along with other pilgrims, sharing meals and stories and generally loving meeting people

TRAVELLING WRAAC

from all over the world. The Camino is a great "leveller" in my opinion. It doesn't matter what a person "does", such as their profession or lack thereof, we are all pilgrims walking the same route, experiencing similar fatigue, blisters on feet, hunger and need for a toilet. What that person does back at home is so totally irrelevant to anything. No one cares. What DOES matter, is how each person treats the next person. Are they friendly? Do they step in and try and help when another is in difficulty of some sort? Do they proffer a band-aid if someone has a need?

What you end up seeing, amongst the beautiful scenery along the way, is the best of humanity. We become like a travelling Camino Family, looking out for one another.

I realise as I write this, that it's also a little reminiscent of my days in the WRAAC. Except no one was drinking too much because the next day was always an early rise with an average of 20+ kilometres to walk.

On my return home at end of July this year (2019) I was glad of the chance to sleep in my own bed and have my comforts all around me

once again. I turned 68 this year and ask myself "would I walk another Camino?" and the answer is "Yes, I think I would". There's plenty of time for rest when I die, the time I have left is for living (how long that might be) and for making the most of each day. As they say "Yesterday is History, Tomorrow is a Mystery, today is all we have, it is a gift and that's why it's called "the present".

"Carpe Diem" - seize the day!!

Thank you so much for your article Cheryl and may you continue to inspire those around you with your courage and zest for life.

We look forward to reading about your next adventure.

Cheryl is a member of the Association and a former member of the ARA and CMF Ed.

A SOLDIER OF THE QUEEN

F32246 Jacqueline Ann Shilling Lt

February 1971 and my journey as a soldier began. I was on the tram to the Kew depot and another woman, Viv, alighted with me. Upon chatting we learned we were off to the same destination; to enlist in the army. Viv and I are still friends and talk across the Tasman a few times a year.

Recruit training was at 3 WRAAC Coy Kew then to 3 DIV INT UNIT South Melbourne as a Private where so much joy and adventure awaited me.

At 3 DIV INT I first experienced the splendour and my love of the Australian bush as many weekends were bivouacs around the state. We women had to buy our Jungle-Greens at army disposal stores and change into them at the depot as we were not issued them or allowed in public in them. At 3

DIV INT I had my first adventure of flying, for aerial photography, then analysing such photographs through the stereoscope. It was through INT I went gliding, taking the controls of the Cessna plane to get to the gliding field at Benalla, near 3 WRAAC Coy recruit camp. Map-making and reading, orientation, POW interrogation, and other Military Intelligence requirements were learned, and firing weapons was a new experience. So much was taught over such a short duration. It must have been excellent instruction as I still remember a lot from those classes.

We were still at war in Vietnam, so training was related to jungle warfare. Fortunately, women did not have to worry about being forced to participate in a war zone. We were to train the men, if necessary.

A SOLDIER OF THE QUEEN

Next was NCO training for a few months then back to INT with a new rank.

At 21, after 12 months at INT, I took a year off to travel the world. Prior to departure I was told certain countries were NO-GO zones for me and was prohibited from visiting those listed. What a great time, anyway, seeing so many countries before MacDonaldis invaded them and changed the travel experience.

Back to INT and the end of the Vietnam war. INT had lost its charm, so I applied for Officer training. Despite missing the enrolment deadline, I was accepted at OCTU and so onto my next adventure, as an Officer Cadet.

I was part of one of the first intakes of women to train exactly as the men for our commissions. Backpacks, bum-packs, RATpacks, rifle and Jungle-Greens (which were now issued). Sleeping on the ground under flimsy hutchies and sharing the conditions just as the men. Learning how to make battle plans, apply military tactics and much more.

We women were on a hugely lower

pay-scale than the men of equivalent rank. When equal pay finally arrived, I had to wait over 18 months for backpay and one guy who graduated after I had said that I should consider the money I had earned years before should be looked on as A BONUS!

Of the many things I looked forward to during that period were the Formal, Army Balls. The splendour and grandness are memories as vivid as the time of the events. We did not have formal mess-dress as did the men, so I always enjoyed searching the Vogue pattern books to make my own Ball gowns. A new gown for each ball.

After graduation I was posted to Ordnance, not my choice but that experience was preparation for a future situation.

At Ordnance, being the only female Officer, I was given privileges of which the men were envious. One was when the remote-bomb-disposal-machine was new to the Army. It arrived at our depot and I was the one chosen to operate it.

As the only female Officer on a multi-corps camp I was given the

A SOLDIER OF THE QUEEN

steering job on the amphibious Duck out on The Bay.

Being the only female Officer also meant I was given the job of preparing supper when the Victorian Chief of Police visited the mess. I was called from teaching a class to do THE WOMAN'S JOB!

Privilege of being the only woman Commissioned Officer amongst so many men.

And NO, I DID NOT sleep with any men to get these experiences! I overheard one of my female sergeants ask another what had I done to get privileges. My respect for her disappeared immediately after hearing that.

I married an NZer in 1977 and some fellow male-officers had the audacity to ask whether my husband objected to me being in the army. Had I thought fast enough I would have asked whether their wives objected.

Motherhood followed in 1986. I had my last parade in 1985 and became a stay-at-home mum from 1986.

I never dreamed that motherhood would include home-schooling

my son from birth till he was 15. I was prepared to give him a Montessori Method education from birth till he was school age, but life had other plans for me.

Being financially secure, I 'retired' to our NZ beach property in 1991, when he was nearly 5 and ready for the AMAZING NZ school system. I could then start my B&B business. Not so.

What a shock. I realised within a week of him in the local school that the only option for a decent education was if I taught him myself. Thank goodness for the excellent training in instruction OCTU gave me. I relied on those skills to get my son through the education required for him to do well.

I had to become itinerant to qualify to home-school as the school shared our boundary, so I bought a tent and took him camping for the required number of weeks per term and did schoolwork in the campgrounds.

Intermediate school was just as bad as primary, so I resumed home-schooling after him wasting nearly a year (they had done NO Social Studies ALL YEAR at week

A SOLDIER OF THE QUEEN

30 of a 40-week year! His exercise books were almost unused. I ended up volunteer-teaching about Australia once a week for the last 10 weeks of that year).

When my son was 15 my tenant in my commercial building went bust so I re-opened with a similar business as it was difficult to find new tenants.

This is where Ordnance training came to my aid. I had never run a 7-day week food shop and the warehousing skills learned at Ordnance helped me keep the doors open and my staff employed until I sold both the business and the premises.

I tried to continue home-schooling and run the business on my own but had to send my son back to school.

Fortunately, a professor from a university visited within weeks of him going to school and he learned of a new degree, MECHATRONICS ENGINEERING.

He was accepted into UNI at 16. My home-schooling days were over. My son gained his Masters in Mechatronics Engineering at 21yr. I am extremely proud of

him and his achievement.

I divorced and have been on my own since 2003.

During the first 9 years in NZ my very-comfortable-retirement-fund disappeared chunk by chunk by numerous people leaving me shell-shocked, (PTSD) requiring counselling to this day.

I lost my 50-acre beach property, the yacht, the commercial building and business, the forestry, flats in Auckland and much more in such a short time.

My 60th birthday present was to be made redundant and finding work was impossible up here in the part of NZ with highest unemployment figures, so I became a student once again.

I did a 2yr-refresher-course in Horticulture as I had forgotten much that I learned at Burnley Horticultural College (MELB) decades before, followed by a 1 year Maori-culture course, then trained as a Budget Advisor, then a 1 year-refresher Small Business course and finally a 1 year Computing course. I was the only pensioner on both the

A SOLDIER OF THE QUEEN

Business and Computing courses.

Last year I spent a few months shoveling SIX truckloads of rock, 7 cubic metres per truck, to repair my drive before going to London for 6 weeks to see my son and his wife and this April I went to London again and we obtained tickets to march to the Cenotaph in Whitehall and attend the ANZAC Day service at Westminster Abbey.

I was 68 early August and my retirement is totally different to what I had worked hard towards and achieved by 40.

I am now on 10 acres and live in two small farm sheds. I manage to live a pioneer existence of simplicity due to the wonderful experiences and skills the army gave me. It is, though, such a contrast to my beautiful architect-designed home I left in Melbourne.

Australia refused me citizenship last year despite my years of military service, awarding me the Australian Defence Medal 'FOR SERVICE', and paying me half the AU pension, so I am pretty-well stuck here in NZ.

Still, 'all is good'. I am not homeless like so many in my area who use

the old Army Drill Hall in town as day shelter, them being closed out to sleep rough at night.

I have to say that I have had One-Hell-of-An-Adventure.

This Soldier of the Queen is still soldiering on.

You are welcome to call if any of you get to NZ. My email is available via Jude Pinkerton Treloar

FROM THE VAULT

SISTERS IN UNIFORM

Sisters in Uniform

3 WRAAC CMF over the years proudly rejoiced in the fact we had several sets of sisters serving with us.

Here is the proof!

This photo is from the Herald Sun (circa 1970s) and passed on to us by our President Carol (Hamilton) King pictured with her sister Suzanne.

Also not mentioned at the time were, sisters Susan and Margaret Brown and Margaret and Barbara Lister.

Well done to all our sisters.

The Hamilton sisters from Oakleigh were among five sets of sisters taking part in the, Christmas parade of the Third Women's Royal Australian Army Corps Company at Kew.

They are Sergeant Suzanne Hamilton and Lance Corporal Carol Hamilton, whose parents, Mr. and Mrs. R. D. Hamilton, live in Warrigal Rd., South Oakleigh.

Suzanne and Carol were pupils at Huntingdale High School, Other pairs of sisters in the parade were the Treasure sisters of Mont Albert who have just enlisted, the Lynch and Pinchen sisters from Glenroy, and the Nardella twins from Brunswick.

The parade is always celebrated as a special occasion and this year's was no exception.



For the first time the company's new formation commander, Colonel F. E. Poke, visited the unit.

Col. Poke presented Efficiency decorations which were awarded to Captain Lesley Bennett of Wantima South, and Captain Gwenda Walker of Box Hill.

Queen's Commissions were presented to Sergeants Kate Sinclair of Preston and Christine Flynn of Malvern.

On parade were a number of married members, from the Officer Commanding down, through the ranks, whose husbands are also members of the CMF.

Music for the parade was provided by the band of the First Battalion Royal Victorian Regiment, Moonee Ponds.

Suzanne and Carol Hamilton are pictured (above), chatting after the parade with Major Beverley Blanksby.

CAN YOU HELP?

Katrina Kittel writes;

My research interest is the experience of POWs in Italy. Although my main focus are the Australian men, their stories cross paths with other Allied POWs revealing a shared history that included the receipt of significant acts of assistance by Italian men and women.

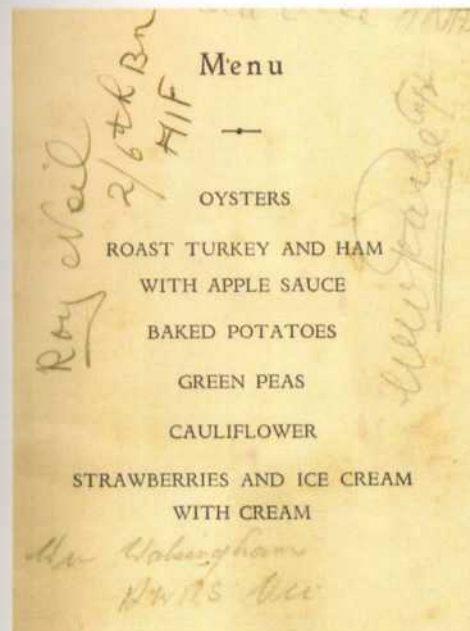
I am a graduate historian, but this research interest started with my father NX60337 Colin Booth who with many hundreds of other Australians and New Zealanders escaped Campo 106 farms dotted on the Piedmont plain between Turin and Milan in September 1943. Col was one of about four hundred Australians who managed to cross the Alps into Switzerland.

For most of the Australians who reached Swiss territory, September 1944 was significant as they were gathered together to begin a long repatriation journey home, travelling from Geneva to Marseilles and then on to Naples and Bombay. This cohort of close to 400 Australians

and New Zealanders stepped off an American liberty ship at Melbourne on 17 Nov 1944, 75 years ago. Amongst this POW cohort were a small number of POWs who joined this cohort as it passed through Middle East and Naples. These POWs had been liberated from life at large and with the Resistance fighters in Italy and Yugoslavia.

General Blamey hosted a reception at Melbourne's Royal Park, perhaps within the Melbourne Zoo building on the night of the POWs' arrival. AWAS women, according to an account by POW Frank Jobson, acted as drivers and waitresses. One of the AWAS women told him that she was disappointed with the low-key welcome given to this cohort of returning ex-POWs. Frank was surprised to meet a female sapper, Diana West.

I have my father's souvenir menu which is signed by those who were around him that night. Investigation of DVA online nominal roll of my interpretations of the names reveal



only two POWs, and to my intrigue, autographs of about twenty AWAS women, including Diana West. Searches within National Archives led me to several digitised B884 series service files. For those that are not digitised, I recently viewed their files in Canberra. I list the names below.

The menu pages are included with my summary. As you look over these pages, your eyes, or your familiarity

with a servicewoman, may read a variation on the name that my eyes see. I welcome corrections to this list.

AWAS women believed to be in attendance 17 November 1944 at Royal Park reception for returning POWs:

Winifred 'Win' Mary Walsingham [VF509891], born 2/11/24, cashier at enlistment, single, her NOK was father Sylvester who lived at Highett.

Hilda Joy Olle [VF513791], born 21/6/25, Kyabram, a clerk at enlistment, her NOK lived at Kyabram.

Diana Margaret West [VFX129059] served as a Sapper. Diana's B884 service file reveals that she had completed two years of a Bachelor of Science at The University of Melbourne and lived South Yarra.

Heather Gillies [VF509551], born 13/7/24, Thornbury. Worked as electrical assembler at time of enlistment, single, married in 1946 to become Mrs Carter.

CAN YOU HELP?



Phyllis Rymer [VF396291], born Bendigo 14/10/1900, a teacher at enlistment, single, her NOK was her father who lived at Armadale.

Joan Bolding [VF516099], her digitised NAA file reveals she was born in Morwell in January 1919. She was single at time of enlistment.

Patricia White [Patricia is likely to be one of the following servicewomen: VF396358, VF396078, VFX64870]. The file for VF396358 Patricia White (viewed at NAA Oct 2019) informs that her father lived at Toorak and was born 14/8/1923 at Armadale. She was single and working as a hairdresser when she enlisted. She was in Melbourne area at the time of the reception dinner.



Ilma Olive Gill [VF397148] was born 21/2/1923 at Ouyen. When she enlisted, she stated she was single, and a typist stenographer. Ilma's smile beams at the enlistment officer's camera.

Doris Evelyn Merritt [VF396975], born 28/10/1924, worked re-service as a waitress and housemaid. In 1995, she wrote as Mrs D.E. Dixon of Cannonvale Qld, wrote to Department of Defence inquiring whether a medal had been struck for women who served.

Moll Furguson [perhaps Margaret Furguson [VF345415] was born 18/6/1923 at Albury. In 1942, she was a Sunday School Teacher at Balldale, NW of Albury.

CAN YOU HELP?



Monica Ann Balkin [VF396160], born 11/5/1914 worked in home duties at time of enlistment and was single, living in South Yarra.

Jean Usher [probably Isla Jean, [VF513888], was single at time of enlistment. Pre-service she worked as an accounting machine operator and a typist/clerk. She had completed 12 months of service in October 1944 and was promoted to Corporal 20/11/1944, several days after the reception.

Ellen Brown [probably VF514277], digitised service file at NAA. Born at Sheep Hills 28/10/23.

Helen Campbell Arnold [probably VF513574] was born 10/3/25 in Perth. In the AWAS, she was promoted to Corporal in April 1944.

Phyllis Garrett's [V387975] digitised NAA file does not include a photo.

? Pearse [probably Linley Pearse VFX128396] was born in Kew in 1923.

Mae? Kerr? – possibly Marjorie Kerr [VF345566] (file not viewed) or Muriel Kerr [VFX91990] (Aus. Wom. Medic. Serv.) but she seems unlikely to have been in Melbourne as file indicates mostly in Qld during 1944. More likely, this AWAS servicewoman was Melva Frances Kerr VFX128480 born in Hopetoun 1923.

A sharp reminder that some signatures are difficult to read on the menu and that I may have misread the names, my first sight read 'Joyce Winchester', a name found on DVA roll as QF272662, but as I re-visit the signature to prepare this summary, I re-read the surname as 'Bannister'. DVA includes Joyce Bannister [VF396922], born in Melbourne 1923.

Files not viewed at NAA for these women who may also be amongst the signatures:

Joyce Skinner [perhaps 98323].

Thelma Greenwood, Australian Women's Land Army.

CAN YOU HELP?

Joan Dawson [probably VFX129128] born April 1924 at Armadale.

My book *Shooting Through: Campo 106* escaped POWs after the Italian Armistice will be released in December 2019. One chapter details the return journey from Switzerland for my father's POW cohort and the comments by POWs about the reception dinner of 17 November 1944. Please contact me if you can assist me to further identify the AWAS women in attendance that night, and also if you wish to purchase a copy of the book.
<https://www.echobooks.com.au/history/shooting-through/>

Katrina Kittel

Contact details for Katrina Kittel

<http://www.phansw.org.au/tracing-australian-pows-in-italy/>

<https://www.facebook.com/KatrinaKittel/AuthorResearcher/>