



Australian Women's
Army Service 1941–1947



Women's Royal Australian
Army Corps 1951–1984

AWAS WRAAC JOURNAL

June – September 2015

AWAS Association (Vic) Inc.

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From the Editor

Dear Members,

Welcome to the second edition of our combined AWAS/WRAAC Journal and apart from a few printing issues the process is moving along quite well. Our Journal is a new venture for both AWAS and WRAAC Associations in the sharing of stories and images that will keep us alive and relevant for many more years.

The feedback has been positive and we hope to continue to receive your helpful and interesting articles for future editions.

We remind you to check the calendar of events section and make note of special activities you may wish to attend.

Thank you once again for your support, encouragement and patience.

Yours in friendship,

Jude Pinkerton-Treloar

Editor



Correction.

Due to an editing problem an incorrect photo representing the late Sister Thelma Bell-McEachern was published. We sincerely apologise for the mistake.

Lt Thelma Bell-McEachern was the last surviving nurse to have served alongside Sister Vivian Bullwinkel in Malaya during WWII. Thelma passed away on the 17th September 2014 at the age of 101.

WRAAC Association (VIC) Inc AGM

SATURDAY 14TH NOVEMBER 2015

The Annual General Meeting will be held at 1100 hrs on Saturday 14th November 2015 at the Shrine of Remembrance.

Check in at reception and you will be directed to the meeting area. This will be an opportunity to look over the extensive renovation work. All Committee positions are declared vacant.

Unfortunately we are unable to serve refreshments following the AGM due to restrictions imposed by the Shrine.

For seating numbers please contact Diane Sherry by 6th November 2015 telephone 0408 553 412 or email dishe1946@yahoo.com.au if you intend to join us.

November Journal Deadline

The deadline for all articles to be included in the November 2015 Journal is:

FRIDAY 2ND OCTOBER 2015.

Articles can be posted or e-mailed to:

Editor AWAS/WRAAC Journal

Post Office Box 307

SAN REMO VIC 3925

Email: johnltreoar1@bigpond.com



WRAAC Association (Vic) Inc Annual General Meeting

Saturday 14th November 2015

Shrine of Remembrance, Melbourne

NOMINATION FORM

Please Print

I (your name).....being a financial member of the
Association, nominate.....for the position of
.....On the committee

Signed

Proposer.....

Seconder.....Print Name.....

I accept the nomination

(Signature)..... Print Name.....

Returns are to be sent to the Secretary, Diane Sherry

Unit 73 – 2 Gremel Road, Reservoir Victoria 3073

By Friday 6th November 2015.

Only financial Member's may nominate, second, or be nominated.

Secretary's Use Only

Date received.....All Financial Yes / No

Diane Sherry

Secretary

Calendar of Events 2015

DATE	EVENT
September	
Friday 11 th	SWAC Launch at Austin Health
October	
Saturday 10 th	WRAAC Social Group Pub Lunch at Orrong Hotel
November	
Wednesday 11 th	Remembrance Day at Shrine of Remembrance
Wednesday 11 th	Remembrance Day at Austin Health
Saturday 14 th	WRAAC AGM
Saturday 21 st	Council of ex Servicewomen Pilgrimage to the Cairn at the Shrine of Remembrance.
Friday 27 th	SWAC Presentation at Austin Health
December	
TBA	WRANS lunch

From the AWAS President

Dear Members,

Welcome to the second edition of the combined AWAS/WRAAC Journal. It was heartening to see the many thousands of people attending the Victorian ANZAC Day Commemorative March this year, and we certainly appreciated the goodwill displayed to all the Veterans.

On behalf of AWAS Association members who were fortunate to be chauffeured in comfortable vehicles along the route so we could safely enjoy the march, we say, a sincere thank you to all the wonderful drivers for their kindness.

A special thanks to the WRAAC girls who helped us in locating the vehicles amid the drizzling rain and crowded walkways, all done with genuine hugs of friendship.

It was certainly a day to remember.

Yours in friendship,

Gwenda Walker



Army Nurses Related To Me



Lois has included articles on other members of her amazing family. They are strong, compassionate and caring women who proudly served Australia.

Lois writes,

Following the article on Sister Thelma Bell-McEachern we were contacted by WRAAC Association member Lois (McLean) Morrison who informs us her Great Aunt Lyla Stewart was a World War I nurse and returned home safely to Australia following the end of hostilities.

As I read the article about Army Nurses it got me thinking about how I nearly enlisted in the RAANC CMF, but not as a nurse, I didn't get that gene. I thought perhaps I could drive an ambulance, but no, girls couldn't do that. Somehow I heard about the WRAAC CMF, so thought perhaps I could enlist and learn to drive a truck and be useful. I enlisted in Aug 1956. When I saw the size of the three ton trucks I decided signals might be the better option and that's where I spent a number of years. In 1961 I was transferred to full-time duty and served for 2 years at 3 WRAAC Coy, Kew. Then back to CMF in the Intelligence Unit at Fitzroy till retirement in Feb 1968. The following Army Nurses are related to me.

Lois Morrison (McLean)

Eliza Ferguson Stewart



Eliza Ferguson Stewart (known as Auntie Lyla to me) was my great Auntie. She was born in the Western District in Victoria and was a Sister at Warrnambool and Hamilton Hospitals before enlisting on 16 July 1915.

Army records are sketchy -

Unit shown as 2 Rfts 2nd Aust Gen Hos. Sailed on the 'Kyarra' 21 Aug 1915 as reinforcements for No.2 AGH in Egypt.

18 Nov 1915 – proceeded for duty to No.4 Aux Hosp Abbassia (There is a Hospital of this name shown on a map and appears to be near the centre of Cairo, Egypt).

AANS S/Nurse 30 Sep 1918

Apptd AIF List 419.

Sister 1 Oct 1918

Returned to Australia on HS 'Wandilla' disembarking in Melbourne on 18 May 1919. Discharged from AANS 25 Jul 1919.



There is no mention of shift to France but in one of her letters home Lyla wrote that she thought they would be landing in Marseille. Some of her letters were shared by her family in the Warrnambool Standard and the Terang Express. These letters can be seen on the Trove Website. The family have photos of her during her time overseas in France and one in particular shows her having a bit of fun, somewhere in France. In 1921 Lyla Married Bill Thompson who came back to Australia on the 'Wandilla' at the same time as Lyla. Family are still trying to find out if they met on the ship or had known each other in France.

Mona Margaret Wilton



Mona Margaret Wilton a second cousin of mine was from the Western District of Victoria.

Mona enlisted on 6 Aug 1941, spent some time at 108 General Hospital, Darley then embarked per "Wanganella" on 30 Aug 1941, disembarking at Singapore on 20 September 1941.

She was attached to 13 AGH and 2/4 CCS. Record of Service continued even though she was posted missing on 22 Apr 1942. She was appointed Lieutenant 6 Dec 1943 and appointed Sister Group 1 on 18 Feb 1944. Her family received official notification on 10 Jan 1945, stating "Previously reported missing believed killed on or after 11 February 1942, now reported became missing on 14 February 1942 and is for official purposes presumed to be dead."

There is a book that describes the incident, 'A Woman's War' by Barbara Angell. Mona's best friend Wilma Oram was interviewed and I think her story would be reasonably accurate. 'Mona couldn't swim at all, I couldn't swim very much, and we jumped out to try and get away from the ship but the ship tipped over on top of us. I said to Mona,

"Oh, we're sunk this time!" It was only an expression that I used and I didn't realise the irony of it. I came up through the rails, put my hands above my head and caught the rails and came up through them, but when I came to the surface Mona was nowhere about and that was it. I never saw her again.'

There is also a story in another book 'On Radji Beach' by Ian W. Shaw from an eyewitness — "I saw Mona being hit by a life raft and never saw her again".

Nurses Memorial

Vyner Brooke Memorial — Bangka Island Indonesia

Dedicated 2nd March 1993

There is a Nurses memorial situated near the very spot where survivors of the Vyner Brooke came ashore on the 16th February 1944. Twenty one Australian Nurses were massacred on that day. The memorial incorporates stone from the Camp Australian nurses occupied as Prisoners of War. A bronze plaque records the names of all 65 Nurses on board the Vyner Brooke.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Adelaide

This following heartfelt inscription dedicated to Nurses who served Australia in time of war, appears on a window situated within the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Adelaide South Australia.

When you go home

Tell them of us and say

For your tomorrow

We gave our today

Lest We Forget

*My sincere thanks to Sister Marie Egan (QEH, Pastoral Care)
for her help in locating this significant window. — Ed.*

Elizabeth Pride Meyer

Another relative is, Second Cousin, Elizabeth Pride Meyer, who is to celebrate her 99th birthday this year. Elizabeth enlisted in the AANS on 6 Oct 1942 and during the war met her husband Burne Brooker who was a Chaplain. She remembers being sent to New Guinea and the use of Penicillin for the first time and a visit from Gracie Fields who sang to soldiers on her ward.

Elizabeth — “I trained in nursing at Epworth Hospital. I enlisted when war broke out, and was sent initially to Alice Springs. I was there during the bombing of Darwin, and looked after troops and locals up and down the train line at that time. I was then stationed in Darwin. We were very well trained nurses. During air raids we would move our patients under the beds and then we would get under there with them.



I was then transferred to Papua New Guinea. These were difficult times. We looked after soldiers injured through combat, and also fought malaria and dengue fever. I was there at the signing of the armistice at Wewak.”

Norma McLean

My sister Norma McLean was in the RAANC CMF for a number of years. She attained the rank of Sgt and left when she married in 1957. She formed many friendships and also met our Sister-in-law to be, Merle Andersen, who also spent time in the RAANC CMF. Norma is to the right of the photo.

Thank you Lois, we really appreciate the sharing of your stories and note your strong links to the Nursing Corps. The WRAAC Association (Vic) is honoured to have former members of the RAANC as members and we know they will relate to your articles.

Lois, many of you may remember as Lt McLean



SWAC Dates to Remember

The Veteran Community Story Writing and Art.

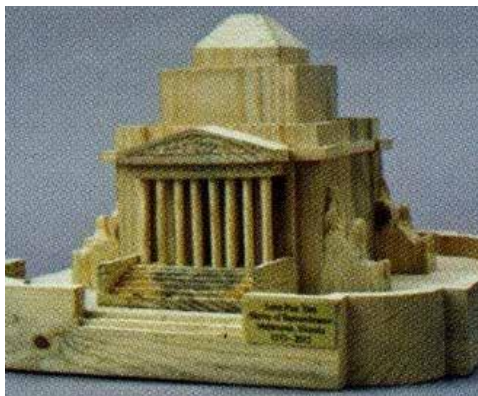
Competition Launch — Friday 11th September 12.30 for 1.00pm

SWAC Presentation — Friday 27th November 11.30 for noon

AWAS Encouragement Award for 2014

Presented to Don Bergman
— Shrine of Remembrance,
Melbourne.

Don joined 5 Bn Victorian Scottish Regiment in 1948, transferred to 2 Commando Coy in 1955. He served with 1 Bn RAR in South Vietnam in 1969. He retired from the army in 1975 and was awarded the Australian Army Trainers Command Commendation in 2002. Don has made wooden toys and other articles for his daughter's amateur theatre group over the years. This entry is his first attempt at this type of article.



Our thanks to BRAVO for the above photo and information — Ed.

AWAS/WRAAC Commemorative Service 17th May 2015

Shrine of Remembrance, Melbourne



A sunny Melbourne morning greeted members and guests as they arrived at the Shrine of remembrance to participate in our commemoration service The AWAS and WRAAC flags (pictured)

highlighted the fact that we once again together to remember a significant part of our lives.

Piper, David Cretney piped us into the Sanctuary to a tune titled 'Edith Cavell', a tribute to our Nurses.

On behalf of the Shrine of Remembrance, Shrine Governor Major Maggie More welcomed all in attendance. Our service was blessed with the incredible voice of Miss Rebecca Dupey-Purcell who sang I am Australian and the National Anthem. The acoustics within the Sanctuary enhance the magic of Rebecca's beautiful voice.

Our Chaplain, the Reverend Bill Pugh remembered our ANZACS and highlighted the significant contribution women had made to Australia's defence in time of need. We were honoured to have Colonel Jan McCarthy read the Ode of Remembrance

In tribute to the memory of those we have lost and will never forget, the following wreaths were placed; AWAS, WRAAC, NAVY, NURSING CORPS, LAND ARMY and WAAAF.

Following the service we gathered in the courtyard to enjoy refreshments and embrace the beautiful sunny day. In spite of the kind weather and sunny day there were very few members in attendance which may affect the future viability of conducting this service.

Centenary Anzac Day Observance

Thursday 23rd April 2015 Austin Health

Approximately 1000 people assembled in the Remembrance Garden, Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital to honour the fallen and acknowledge the centenary of the Gallipoli landings. The atmosphere was charged with pride and respect as the Ode was read by Graeme McSolvín, a Vietnam Veteran.

Wreaths and tributes to those we have lost remind us of the pain and suffering that war imparts on families and friends that will never be forgotten.

The girls caught up with Verna Phillips (War Widows and Widowed Mothers Association) Suzanne Hall (War Widows Guild of Victoria) and Linda Yemm (RSL Info Officer Aged & Health Support)

A sheath of Singapore orchids was placed at the AWAS plaque by Junior VP Jude Pinkerton-Treloar on behalf of the AWAS Association Victoria. The President of the WRAAC Association Victoria, Margaret Jager placed a sheath of Singapore orchids at the WRAAC Plaque. Once again the AWAS and WRAAC side by side and in step.

Our sincere thanks to Austin Health for their care and compassion to all Veterans.

Between the Dances Book Launch

Sunday 8th March 2015
Shrine of Remembrance — Melbourne

The Melbourne launch of the much anticipated book, *Between the Dances* by Jacqueline Dinan was held in the comfort of the spacious theatre within the Education Centre, Shrine of Remembrance before a receptive audience of former service women and their families. It was a significant date for the launch as it was also International Women's Day.

Melissa Baluch, on behalf of The Shrine of Remembrance welcomed all in attendance and introduced the MC, Ms Sophie Shaw, who acknowledged the exceptional women who paved the way for future generations of women in service of their country. Sophie emphasised through the courage of women during the war years today's young women enjoy greater freedom of choice to continue to maintain their careers and have a family, totally unheard of not so long ago in Australia.



From 2011 Jacqueline collected stories from female World War II Veterans and in doing so travelled extensively throughout Australia. Members of the AWAS Association (Vic) will recall Jacqueline attending our Luncheon several years ago inviting members to contribute stories for the book.

Legacy CEO Jennie Walker, a former Army Reservist delivered a powerful speech highlighting the women who made a difference to Australia's overall defence during WWII and their contribution to the freedom we now enjoy.

The book is now available through your local book store at a cost of \$28.00 where you may be required to place an order. Well done to all concerned, it is certainly a great read.

Don't forget Jacqueline Dinan's other wonderful book, *A Woman's War* (A mother's home front battle). The story centres on the life of an Australian Mother during the Great War as we gain an insight into the long term consequences of war.

Lulla Mary Evelyn (Johnston) Robinson NFX 205885



Lulla was born in 1917 and began her Nursing training in Sydney and against family wishes stayed on and completed her studies. What is exceptional is that this was an era when a woman's place was within her family structure not on your own in a big city.

Lulla recalls whilst completing her training the girls would go out dancing at the local Mess Hall on a Friday night with a group of Army boys where they would swap around and dance with each other. When asked if they played jokes on each other she said yes, only if we knew they could take it and obviously if Matron wasn't there!

We love the feisty spirit of Margaret (Robinson) Jager's Aunt Lulla, a former member of the Australian Army Medical Women's Service (AAMWS) 113 Concord Military Hospital.

Lulla recalls how sad it was to see returning soldiers so badly injured and how hard it was to deal with the injuries from a nursing perspective, but at least they did return home.

Ex Servicewomen's Reunion – Swan Hill

April 2015

It was love at first sight when Lulla met Sergeant William Robinson, her patient at Concord and on his discharge from the Army and hospital, they married. Unfortunately, she had to leave the AAMWS as a woman could not be married and stay in the services.

Lulla has 4 children, 9 grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren and stayed in the medical field working with the Red Cross until she retired. Lulla will be 98 years young in October 2015 and we wish her a very happy birthday.

Thank you Margaret for your interesting article on Aunt Lulla, now we know where you get your "can do" spirit, it's in your DNA! — Ed.

P hoebe Parker, Verna Phillips and Joan Johnstone all report to having a great time at Swan Hill in early April this year until Joan had an unfortunate fall at the RSL Club and had to be treated at the local hospital. Joan sustained a nasty cut to her leg but assures us all is well now.

Joan said that Maralyn Toppinen (WRAAC) accompanied her to the Hospital and looked after her as the Doctor attended to her wounds. Joan then returned to the Club and re-joined her friends.

The Reunion will be held again next year on the first Sunday in April 2016 in beautiful Swan Hill.



The Lebensborn Program (1935–1945)

The tragedy of the Nazis plan to breed a super race of blue eyed and blond Nazi elite went horribly wrong for the children left to carry the burden of their birth. Today they are men and women in their late seventies and early eighties ostracised by their country of birth and many disowned by their biological parents.

What seemed like a good idea to force women into breeding a super race with specially selected SS Officers is horrendous and shocked the world when discovered. Today, the Lebensborn children consider they should receive compensation against the Nazi regime for crimes against humanity. Such is their legacy.

WWII Japanese Battleship Found.



It would seem an American billionaire has found the resting place of the Japanese Battleship, Musashi after its final encounter with US forces 70 years ago. The battle was ferocious with American war planes attacking the ship in the October of 1944. The discovery is exceptional as historians equate it to finding the Titanic because of its status.

Musashi is one of the three biggest Japanese vessels ever built with the Yamato as its sister ship. They were possibly the most powerful and heaviest battleships ever constructed. The ship is now at the bottom of the Sibuyan Sea just off the Philippines.

Musashi is named after the city where it was built.

May 1945 AWAS Disembarking Lae

Following our recent article.

Our much loved and respected member, Ethel (Calvert) St John (2AABP) writes,

I had expected to be one of that group, but arrived back from final leave to discover the girls from 2 Base Postal Unit had been removed from the draft. Fury hath no We soon discovered why. About a month later the two bombs were dropped. Took the Japs some days to decide they could not fight Atomic warfare. As soon as peace was declared people did not wait for the names to be released of the POW survivors, they just wrote to everyone they knew who had been captured. Three and a half years with no news of these boys.

As Melbourne Base PO was the only one (of 7) to have a full card indexing system of the full 8th Division, all these letters from all over Australia landed on us.

Until we received lists of names as the boys were found and recorded, all we could do was hang on to them after we had sorted them alphabetically, and get on with the usual hundred-thousand articles per day we normally averaged.

After a couple of weeks, 2 or 3 times each day lists of survivors would turn up at our door. Then the fun began. First the names were transferred onto the card index, then checked against the letters we were holding, and where possible dispatched. The only way we could cope with this huge workload was to have lots of Red Cross volunteers to come in after work for some hours and become cross eyed checking names and addresses.

After a normal days work my evenings were spent organising Red Cross workers. Thank goodness the Palais De Dance was a huge area.



One of our girls had a brother, a POW. When the lists first started arriving Daph would be watching for them, give a little whoop and run into the Captains office to look at the names. Bill might be on the list.

As time went by Bills name never appeared. Daph would be trying to sneak a look without being seen. He did not come back. I told that story in part of the eulogy I did at Daph's funeral. We had another girl in our unit whose brother had been on the *H.M.A.S Sydney* when it was sunk. At least she knew where he was, but she was dead before they actually found the wreckage.

There must have been many canvas 4ft mail bags packed tightly with letters that could not be delivered but I never saw one. Seventy years ago girls were far more sheltered than they are today. I suspect they were kept hidden in the copious cellars at the Palais and were taken down each night after the Red Cross workers left. Our few permanent male workers were all older men who had spent their working life in the G.P.O mail room and knew the system backwards.

Now I understand why the draft to Lae had been cancelled from our unit. Someone would only have to whisper in the ear of the General in charge of Postal that the war was about to end and he would know what to expect. It was not the time when 2 Base Postal could afford to lose their two most experienced girls. Rita, from the Registration room and me from the Mail room floor.

When I saw some of the girls arrive back from Lae with horrible skin problems I was rather glad I had not gone. After my first trip to Darwin in early April thinking the wet season was over but not allowing time for the heat to dry out the ground so the humidity was shocking, I was very glad I had not gone to Lae.

Thanks again Ethel for sharing your story with us and how important the Postal service was to the morale of all during the war years. We could feel the girl's pain as they searched for news of their loved ones. Ed

Next time you visit the Shrine of Remembrance you will find Ethel's AWAS uniform proudly on display in the WWII Galleries.

ANZAC Centenary Exhibition

A \$35 million travelling exhibition will be touring Australia from September this year featuring 200 items (some interactive) ranging from Artillery pieces, Diggers diaries and other personal memorabilia and winding up in Sydney in April 2017.

The exhibition will visit 23 locations and all States and Territories. This promises to be a wonderful exhibition and one to share with all the family.

Bookings are essential so for more information contact:

www.spiritofanzac.gov.au

Vale

LAURIE Laura Betty (nee Playfair) 1 DAQMG SAust Trg Bn Darley	SF65056 20 TH January 2015
LONDISH Marie (nee Morrow) 2 nd Ech	VF345744 25 th July 2014
LONG Thelma (nee Coyne) AWAS	VF346571 April 2015
MacDONALD Marjory Leah (nee Fife) WRAAC Trg Coy Queenscliff	F3/117 30 th December 2014
TRETHOWAN Doreen (nee Perry) 1 Aust BOD	VF345585



Lest we forget

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



WRAAC Association (Vic) Incorporated



Certificate of Incorporation No.: A0051572X

PRESIDENT: Margaret Jager
SECRETARY: Diane Sherry

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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:



Membership No

AWAS Association (Vic) Inc Annual Membership Renewal

**RENEWAL FEES FALL DUE ON 1ST AUGUST 2015
TO BE PAID BY 1ST SEPTEMBER 2015**

Please print clearly

ARMY NUMBER:.....

SURNAME:.....MAIDEN NAME:.....

CHRISTIAN NAMES: (In Full).....

ADDRESS:.....

.....POST CODE:.....

TELEPHONE NUMBER:.....

UNIT/CORPS:.....

To update our files please nominate a contact name, address and telephone number.

SURNAME:.....RELATIONSHIP/FRIEND:.....

CHRISTIAN NAMES: (In Full).....

ADDRESS:.....

.....POST CODE:.....

TELEPHONE NUMBER:.....

RENEWAL FEE \$10.00

PAYMENT: By cheque or money order made payable to

"AWAS Association (Vic) Inc"

or pay into bank account of AWAS Association (Vic) Inc.

Bank: Commonwealth — BSB Number: 063000, Account Number: 00900547

(Please **enter your name as reference**

when paying directly into bank account via online or at a bank)

Mrs Cheryle Brown

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Liz (Stone) Maclaine
Telephone: 03 9397 1043
Brenda (Ruby) Walters
Telephone: 03 9846 2152

Interstate and Country Representative

Carol (Hamilton) King
Telephone: 02 4233 0956



From the WRAAC President

Dear Members,

Welcome to our Journal and once again we have a busy time ahead of us organizing the year's activities. What an amazing time of the year, it was wonderful to see all the Girls marching on ANZAC Day as we commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the Gallipoli landings. As we reflect on this significant time in our History we should spare a moment to remember the women who worked so hard back in Australia knitting the much needed socks, gloves and scarves for our battle weary men.

The women who could not join the AANS volunteered their time making shirts and pyjamas for the returning wounded. It was certainly appreciated by the homesick men. We remember our nurses who cared for the sick and wounded so far away from our shores.



We think of the AWAS who served Australia in World War II and admire their dedication and skill. The AWAS principal object was to release men from certain military duties thus enabling men to be used in combat roles. Australia depended on our women and they did not let us down.

Our plans for a successful AWAS/WRAAC Commemorative Service, and our annual Bunning's sausage sizzle was blessed with good weather and conditions.

However, we would have liked to have had a higher attendance at the Shrine Service as the weather was not really a factor.

At Reserve Forces Day, it was good to see the 12 ladies who were there but only 8 marched. The day was good in that it didn't rain.

Our Luncheon at the International Brighton was held on the 11th July this year due to extensive renovations at the venue which did not detract from over 80 guests having a great day. What a day we had, I have never heard so much chatter and our guest speakers were wonderful.

Thank you, Dorothy Holmquest and Joan Johnstone, what beautiful memories you shared with us. Thank you to Kelli Brogan who sang the New Zealand National Anthem and the Australian National Anthem because our theme was ANZAC. We hope you enjoy the enclosed photos.

A sincere welcome home to our Service Personnel on their safe return from Operation Slipper.

Yours in friendship,

Margaret (Robinson) Jager

WRAAC Social Group Pub Lunch

7th February 2015

Liz McLaine writes,

On a warm Melbourne Saturday afternoon at the Orrong Hotel in Armadale, 26 girls who had served in the WRAAC, AWAS and WRANS attended the WRAAC Social Group Luncheon. Unfortunately 21 girls were unable to join us this time. Some due to the distance they had to travel others had previous commitments. Whatever date that the luncheon is on there is always someone who is unable to attend. We welcomed six girls who previously had not attended and they all said they enjoyed the function and hope to see us next time.

The Orrong Hotel has a wide range of meals to choose from, as well as delicious sweets. Drinks are reasonably priced. As usual there was a lot of talking and plenty of laughter, also lots of reminiscing about the days when we were all serving members. There was also plenty of “what has become of girls we served with?”

There was a lot of talk about the 65th Anniversary of the formation of the WRAAC events to be held in Canberra on the 12th to the 15th of February 2016. Many present at the luncheon intend travelling to Canberra for this special anniversary.

A great day was had by all with the next luncheon to be on Saturday the 10th October, once again at the Orrong Hotel, Armadale.

WRAAC 65th Anniversary Update

If you intend going to the 65th Anniversary event in Canberra and don't know anyone suggest you give me a call on (03) 9397 1043.

For all correspondence regarding the 65th Anniversary contact

Merri Hepworth

Anniversary Organising Committee (AOC)

WRAAC 65, PO Box 73
JERRABONBERRA NSW 2619
Email wraac65@gmail.com

Remember to check our website for more information regarding the 65th Anniversary.

www.wraacvic.com



WRAAC Association (Vic) Inc Annual Luncheon

Saturday 11th July 2015 Brighton International Bay Street Brighton

A great day of friendship, laughter and the promise to do it all again next year is captured in the photos taken at the International on the 11th July 2015. The feedback has been positive and our thanks to membership for your support and goodwill.



Photos

1. Absent friends table.
2. Guest speaker; Joan Johnstone.
3. Alan Stebbings, Gai Cooke, Luise Laudani, Jenny Simpson, Kath Murnane and Margaret Jager enjoying the day.



The parade of our flag, banner and standard carried by Margaret Brown, Carol King and Sheryl English

Reserve Forces Day 2015

5th July 2015



Reserve Forces Day Melbourne, was once again a great event with over 300 participants on parade. The weather was indeed perfect and the significance of the Shrine of Remembrance reflects the gratitude of a Nation as we honour those who served.

As in keeping with the Centenary of the Gallipoli Landings descendants of the Royal Australian Navy Bridging Train (a unit manned by Royal Australian Naval Reservists)

were honoured with a medallion to commemorate the occasion. Ian Jager (Margaret Jager's husband) was a recipient of the medallion as his Great Uncle, Sydney Menzies was a member of the RAN Bridging Train. The static display this year consisted of WW1 Jeeps, Trucks and Motorcycles.

Well done to the Reserve Forces Day Council Victoria for another great Parade.



Photo

1. Sheryl English, Kath Murnane, Jude Pinkerton-Treloar, Margaret Jager, Margaret Dark, Alayne Quintal and Denise Hodder waiting for Myrene Purcell to arrive for the march.

Photos

2 & 3. WRAAC on Parade 2015.

Anzac Day Commemorative March

25th April 2015

Extremely wet weather and the threat of a home grown terrorist attack did little to deter the thousands of Melburnians and visitors joining together as one to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the Gallipoli landings. As former members of the WRAAC proudly marched along St Kilda Road to the beat of our own drum, realising we had to, as unfortunately there was not a band within cooee of us!

The crowd cheered us on as we again followed in the footsteps of the AWAS with most of the ladies in vehicles, waving to the receptive crowd. Children called out to us, proudly waving their Australian Flags. How fortunate we are in this country to receive such a genuine show of affection that's not manufactured or under any threat of retaliation.

This year, I think we finally got it!



Photos

1. Waiting to step off past Presidents Jude & Brenda enjoy the moment with President Margaret Jager.
2. Proudly wearing their Grandmother's and Great Grandmother's medals to the March, Hannah with Margaret and Ryan with his mother Emma.

Bunning's Sausage Sizzle

23rd May 2015



Once again our sausage sizzle was a success with many helpers and a lot of stories and laughter, we even cooked sausages! Thanks Liz Mc for our tea and coffee and to Carol who came from New South Wales for the day.

Thank you everyone who came and helped on the day.

Photos

1. Carol King and Marg Brown waiting for customers.
2. Jude Pinkerton-Treloar and Diane Sherry enjoying the sunshine.



Keswick Barracks Adelaide

Following our recent article about Keswick Barracks, AWAS Association Victoria committee member, Pauline (Barlett) Priestly (5th Aust Movt Control HQ) writes,

I was very interested to read the article about Keswick Barracks in the last Newsletter.

I was posted to 5th Aust Movement Control during the war, working first in the Shell Company building in North Terrace, Adelaide, then later at Keswick Barracks.

This was during the time that the troops were being brought back from the Middle East where they had been fighting in the Western Desert and Tobruk. They sailed to Perth then were loaded on to cattle trucks with paillasses' filled with straw to sleep on. The journey across the Nullarbor couldn't have been very comfortable though of course they wouldn't have had to worry about air conditioning! The journey ended at the Wayville Staging Camp.

While at Keswick I acted as RTO for the Servicewomen passing through this Staging Camp.

When the battle weary soldiers arrived in Adelaide they were informed they were to be sent straight on to New Guinea without first having leave. They mutinied and refused to leave the Wayville Staging camp - except of course to travel into Adelaide and make for the pubs. It was a sad sight to see drunken soldiers still in their desert gear littering the streets of Adelaide. Major General Blamey was blamed and was jeered at whenever he dared to put in an appearance.

So pubs were kept shut until 2.30 in the afternoon then of course again at 6 pm. It was a very unhappy sight to see. Eventually I assume they were granted leave before making their way to New Guinea and the Kokoda Track.



I well remember that time as I used to have nightmares each night, waking to find myself in my own bed instead of among the melee of disillusioned diggers.

Pauline also served in Darwin during WWII and is currently a committee member of the AWAS Association Victoria.

Thank you Pauline, we always appreciate your interesting articles.
— Ed

War Widows Guide of Australia (VIC) Inc

If you are in a situation where you may need help and guidance remember you are not alone. There is the War Widows Guild that offers a multitude of services.

The Guild understands we are all different and you may not wish to join a group due to a multitude of reasons. However, the Guild provides advocacy to the Commonwealth, Victorian and local Governments. Members of the Victorian Guild Committee represent war widows on many ex-service community forums and organisations with comparable ethics.

The Guild brochure reads,
Becoming a Guild member means you are part of a national body and that you are represented on a state and national level to ensure that the hard fought for rights and conditions of war widows are maintained, improved and continued into the future. Your membership will count.

Please do not hesitate to call the Guild for further information or



advice. There are many organisations available to assist you and we encourage you to contact them. We exist to help and support you.

Guild Motto.

"We all belong to each other. We all need each other. It is in serving each other and in sacrificing for our common good that we are finding our true life."

The Guild Motto adopted in 1949 is an extract from a 1941 Christmas message from King George VI

For further information contact;
War Widows Guild of Australia (Vic)
PO Box 203 Hawthorn Victoria 3122
Telephone: (03) 9819 4528
Fax: (03) 9819 0357
Email: jill.wilmott@vaseyrslcare.org.au

Operation Slipper



It was heartening to observe thousands of Australians line City streets to pay their respect and gratitude to service personnel in a genuine welcome home parade. In Victoria, following a march along St Kilda Road, a moving service was conducted at the Shrine of Remembrance. Operation Slipper officially ended in December 2014 and it has been 13 years since Australia's war on terror began in Afghanistan, following the hijacking of aircraft deliberately flown into the World Trade Centre.

In those 13 years more than 34,000 Australia service personnel served our nation with pride and dignity. Together we mourn the passing of forty one brave men who gave their lives, paying the supreme sacrifice. We think of the wounded and those mentally and physically scarred by war. Our service men and women together with their families deserve to be honoured for their sacrifice. Lest we forget.

Fish, Chips and Vinegar!

As former Servicewomen we really enjoy the wonderful stories of friendships that added so much depth to our time in the WRAAC. It appears some friendships never fade and happy memories live on forever. Whenever there is a gathering of WRAAC (Vic) girls the name of Chips Rafferty always seems to come into the conversation along with Fish (Cheryle (Howes) Brown) and Vinegar.

In early December 2014, Fish and Chips caught up after so many years with Vinegar completing the trio at our July Function. The girls shared mutual friends and appeared to have a busy social life apart from the Army.

The trio is now complete with Denise (Mitchell) Hodder (AKA Vinegar)

Well done Girls, you look great.

— Ed.



Around the WRAAC Pack

Grey Nomads



Brenda (Ruby) and Rod Walters are presently touring Australia, following the sun. Have a great trip kids, we are thinking of you.

Brenda and Rod caught up with Amy Jager whilst in Cairns.

Baby news



Congratulations to Gai Cooke on the birth of her grandson Alexander Edward Cooke on the 2nd May 2015. Pictured here with his mother Janelle.

Vale

Mrs Patricia Stebbing

It is with great sadness we report the passing of Captain Alan Stebbing's much loved wife, Patricia on the 12th March 2015. Patricia was a lady with a great sense of humour and with her West Highland Terrier became official visitors to the Caulfield General Hospital where they visited patients with dementia and acquired head injuries. The patients looked forward to the weekly visit from Patricia and her dog and the happy times shared together. Our thoughts and prayers are with Alan and his family at this sad time.

Rest in peace Patricia.



Kaye Townley

On behalf of the AWAS and WRAAC Associations our deepest sympathy is extended to Barry Townley and Family on the recent passing of his wife, Kaye.

Barry and Kaye always ensured former servicewomen visiting the Swan Hill RSL Club for our yearly reunions enjoyed the time together.

Kaye was a special part of the Swan Hill experience and will always be remembered for her generosity of spirit.

We all cherish the beautiful little gifts Kaye lovingly made for us.

Rest in Peace Kaye.



Elizabeth (Betty) Hamilton

Deepest Sympathy is extended to the Hamilton family on the passing of their mother (affectionately known as Axie). Suzanne and Carol pictured here with their mother were both former members of the WRAAC.

Captain Ruth Durance (3 WRAAC Coy) F31831

It is with great sadness we report the passing of Captain Linda Ruth Durance Sloss on the 12th August 2015 at Cabrini hospital.

Our sincere condolences are extended to Ruth's husband John and their families. The WRAAC Association Victoria, participated in the service at St John's Anglican Parish Malvern East and sincerely thank John and Jillian for their generosity and kindness at this sad time. Rest in Peace dear Ruth. Lest we forget

We will have a tribute to Captain Durance in the next Journal. — Ed



Photo

Brenda visiting Ruth in Hospital in June.

Sick Parade

Margaret (Mathews) Prowse

Get well wishes are extended to AWAS and WRAAC Association member Margaret (Mathews) Prowse ESF Liaison AAPC who is recovering after a recent fall. Margaret is a great supporter of both Associations and dearly loved by the WRAAC girls.

We are thinking of you.

Dawn (Fraser) Ciechomski

Dawn had a knee operation during May. All the best for your recovery, hope to see you again soon.



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

Travel News

Jude Pinkerton-Treloar writes, Milne Bay (February 2015)



Our family only managed to visit Milne Bay during our recent trip to New Guinea due to the emergence of two cyclones heading on a collision course with our much anticipated trip. However, this did not deter from the significance of our pilgrimage to see where our Dad spent a large part of his Military Service. Milne Bay is indeed picturesque and lived up to the description we were fortunate to read by a member of the 4th Field Ambulance notes. (circa 1942)

It reads,

As we sailed into this sheltered harbour on board the Liberty ship, Jason Lee all we could see stretched before us was a tropical paradise with coconut palms along the shoreline as far as the eye could see! The water was calm with not even a ripple and the joy of watching local natives in canoes crossing the bay from one side to the other, waving to us!

The serenity was short lived however because as they approached Gili-Gili jetty the Japanese had a little party in store for the new arrivals in the form of an Air raid and our boys were in a War Zone!

Japanese planes regularly flew overhead reconnaissance with our Dad and his mates taking cover and waiting for the all clear.



February 2015

On our first sighting of Milne Bay we gently threw poppies overboard in remembrance of those we have lost. Our thoughts were with the families of our boys who fought with great courage and honour. Our family feel humbled and privileged to have walked where our Dad and his mates lived and fought so many years ago and have a deeper understanding of what they endured so far away from home.

We also sensed a strong bond with the local people we spoke to in New Guinea and it was an honour to have met them. There is a monument at Milne Bay depicting the history of the battle and once again we placed poppies in remembrance. Milne Bay is now recognised as the first major defeat of the Japanese on land during the Pacific war.



Gabo Island

War Time History Revealed

As Victorians, we all know East Gippsland is noted for its breathtaking scenery, sandy beaches, lakes and a spectacular wilderness area. However, very few Australians know that during WWII, top secret bunkers were constructed along the coastline. Inside these bunkers, Service personnel were recording information received from perhaps aerial reconnaissance or the movement of ships off our east coast. Margaret Hattersley, a member of the WRANS Association Victoria kindly sent us an account of her visit to Gabo Island in 2014. The Island was home to a Radar Station during the war and was certainly a highly restricted area.

Margaret Hattersley writes,

In December 2014 I visited Gabo Island for a three-day stay. Gabo Island Lighthouse was built in 1862 and the island is managed by Parks Victoria, approximately 14k from Mallacoota, close to the border of NSW and 500 metres off the Wilderness coast of Croajingalong National Park. Access is by charter boat or light aircraft who have a ranger presence who lives in the Lighthouse Keeper's cottage and museum.

I always had a wish Gabo Island would be interesting to visit, then along came this opportunity. Jenny Edwards Gippsland High Country Tours had programmed a three-day stay. Met the charter boat at Mallacoota for the 20 mins trip. Sea was calm and too soon there we were — Gabo Island.

Parks Victoria Ranger met us at the jetty and transported us to our HQ accommodation at the southern tip of the island with our gear and food for three days. Built of pink granite, the assistant lighthouse keeper's cottage, is well lit and comfortable, and accommodates 8 people. Nice well-equipped kitchen and two bathrooms, what more could you want, no bunks — all comfortable beds and linen.

The island itself is well covered by blackberry and imported kikuyu grass, which seems to have taken over any of the original foot and drive tracks except the main one from the jetty to the lighthouse. Which is a pity as I'm sure there are places to be explored, including the site of the WWII Radar Station, which is on the northern end of the island and very difficult to find.

Trevor, a member of our group went off exploring on his own and returned covered in blood and scratches. There is an easier way but Wayne, our leader, and I could not find it, despite directions from the ranger. Trevor said there were only slabs of concrete — nothing much else unfortunately.

At least Trevor found it by taking a different route to us. There must have been a road there once!!

There is a small cemetery on the island which consists of only two headstones — although there are believed to be quite a few of early lighthouse keeper's and early settlers buried there.



A memorial commemorating the sinking of the *Monumental City* is on the track to the lighthouse — the *Monumental City* foundered on a reef off the island. The story goes that the men waded ashore, attached a rope and advised the women and children to come ashore holding on to the rope, apparently they refused thinking the ship was stable enough and they had a bed there, so stayed aboard. The ship turned over in rough weather and they were all drowned.

The lighthouse is remarkable built solely of pink granite quarried on the island, as are the cottages and lighthouse precinct which is surrounded by a high pink granite wall. This seems to keep out the gale-force winds that always seem to be present. Tried some rock-hopping to see the seals but found my balance isn't what it used to be and the winds fairly knocked me over so abandoned that activity.

There are seals, lots of sea-birds and although we didn't see any native animals, there were about a dozen big fat black cows which are there supposedly eating the kikuyu grass. Also there is a chook enclosure where we took the food scraps.

Gabo is considered the largest breeding colony of fairy penguins in the world. Shearwaters also breed on the island and arrive at dusk to feed their young. We tramped into a gale-force wind to the end of the airstrip to see the penguins and shearwaters come ashore up a steep overgrown cliff at about 9p.m. It got quite cold and windy and there weren't any arrivals that we could see so abandoned that exercise, and walking back came across dozen of penguins near the cottage.

They apparently were everywhere during the night as they made such a noise looking for and feeding their chicks right on our doorstep (so to speak).

There are no eucalypts on the island, the dominant vegetation being a forest of Saw Banksia and Giant Honey Myrtle, and plenty of blackberry bushes and Kikuyu grass.

Predicted bad weather saw us leave Gabo a day early so we stayed a night at Mallacoota, which was good.

And that ends our trip.

Our sincere thanks to Margaret, for sharing her Gabo Island adventure with us. It's certainly on my list to visit. We thank Wayne McCallum for his amazing photograph. — Ed

Thank You

The Association has received a considerable amount of well wishes and congratulations regarding our Journal.

I would like to pass on our sincere thanks for your input into our new venture. It was a big step but as we all know as women in the Defence Force, nothing is too hard.

A special thanks to Jude our Editor and Cheryle.

*On behalf of the Committee,
Thank you for your most welcome feedback.*

Margaret Jager.

WRAAC Membership

**Annual Membership fees were due 1st July 2015.
A subscription renewal form is enclosed for all Annual members.**

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

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

F15324

Nee ASKEW
Annual Member

Mrs Beverley KUMMERLOWE

ARA

1969–1975 WRAAC School
1 RTB (Transport)
2/4 RAR

F65310

Nee PIRZL
Annual Member

Ms Belinda PRANCE

ARA

1990–1995 HQ Trg Cmd
127 Sig SqnWatsonia

Can You Help

We have lost contact with some of our life members.

Can you help us to locate the following members?

Ms Joanne Balog	Cpl Dorothy Berry
Ms Shirley Brown	Mrs Jeanette Coburn
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 or email: dishe1946@yahoo.com.au





WRAAC Association (Vic) Inc

**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS
WERE DUE ON 1ST JULY 2015.**

FOR THE PERIOD 1ST JULY 2015 TO 30TH JUNE 2016

To renew your membership could you please
complete this form and forward with your annual subscription of \$8.00.
Alternatively Life Membership is available for \$80.00.

To the Membership Officer: **Miss Diane Sherry**
WRAAC Association (Vic) Inc.
Unit 73 / 2 Gremel Road
Reservoir Vic 3073

Cheque or Money Order made payable to WRAAC Association (Vic) Inc.

Name:

Address:

.....

Telephone:

Email:

Enclosed Cheque / Money Order / Cash \$.....

Diane Sherry

Membership Officer