



WRAAC ASSOCIATION (VICTORIA) INC.

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Telephone : (03) 5678 5486 Website : www.wraacvic.com

NEWSLETTER

August 2008 – No 3/2008

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Honorary Chaplain

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

Greetings and welcome to all, as we approach Spring and the welcome thoughts of warmer days, footy finals and long lunches.

The response to the website has been encouraging and we thank you so much for your kind letters, phone calls and emails. Our site can only grow with your continued input and support. Therefore, in order to keep the site fresh and interesting we need lots of your WRAAC stories and photos.

Following the luncheon on the 26th July a few of our girls sat around a kitchen table and chatted about their days as members of the WRAAC, great stories of young women doing extra ordinary things their civvy friends could only dream about. The girls appeared to take on roles and tasks that took them way out of their comfort zone and how they met the challenges appeared to be a factor in each girl's story. We need your great stories to enrich our history and maybe a young person looking at our site will gain an understanding of service life and the bonds of friendship that keep us together forever.

Yours in friendship

Jude (Wood) Pinkerton-Treloar

**ARISING FROM OUR COMMITTEE
MEETING**

**WRAAC AGM
Saturday 4th October 2008**

The Annual General Meeting will be held at 11.00am on Saturday 4th October 2008. The venue will be the Education Centre, Shrine of Remembrance. Please complete the attached form if attending and for any nominations for committee see attachment no.1.

Tea/coffee and biscuits provided after meeting.

**RESERVE FORCES DAY
31ST August 2008**

This year 21 Sqn RAAF will exercise their right to enter City of Melbourne before the Reserve Forces Day March.

Form up at Queen Victoria Gardens South of Princes Bridge, Melways Ref 2F, and H7 at 12.30pm for step off at 1.00pm.

We march to the Shrine Forecourt where a short service will be conducted. If you do not wish to march please join us at the Shrine for the service.

Dress: Blazer, beret, scarf and medals, if you do not have a blazer wear warm comfortable clothing and shoes. Don't forget to bring an umbrella.

Following the service we will gather at the WRAAC plaque to place a wreath in remembrance. Meet up for coffee at the Observatory Café after the march. A great opportunity to catch up with mates.

**THE COUNCIL OF EX-SERVICEWOMEN
ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE TO THE MEMORIAL
CAIRN AND LUNCHEON
Saturday 22nd November 2008**



On Saturday 22nd November 2008 at 11.30am you are invited to attend the Annual Pilgrimage to the memorial Cairn (Melways map 2G A10) in celebration of the unveiling 23 years ago, following the service a Luncheon will be held at the charming English Speaking Union, 1464 Toorak Road West South Yarra at 12 noon for 12.30pm. (Melways map 2L D4-5 between Walsh and Marne Streets). Car parking is available alongside Fawkner Park.

Parking for the service will be available within the Gardens as Melbourne Parks will ensure access to the area. Remember to bring a folding chair and water to the Service as these facilities are not available in the garden area.

The girls who attended last years service and luncheon had a great day in the company of ex-servicewomen from the other services and look forward to catching up with them again. A guest speaker has been invited to attend the luncheon this year.

Friends and Carers are most welcome to join with us.

Booking arrangements – 2 course luncheon including drinks and pre luncheon nibbles at a cost of \$35.00 per person.

Cheques to be made payable to the Council of Ex-servicewomen's Association and forwarded with a stamped and self addressed envelope to:

Miss Jessie Perkins
25 Alma Street
MALVERN EAST VIC 3145

**SWAN HILL EX-SERVICEWOMEN REUNION
April 2009**

Further information in December 2008 newsletter.

**EX WRAAC SOCIAL GROUP
PUB LUNCH ORRONG HOTEL
11th October 2008**

The next lunch will be held on 11th October 2008. Give Liz Maclaine, Lyn Board and Bev Bond a call if you would like to attend.

Liz Maclaine 03 9397 1043

Lyn Board 03 5989 2553 and

Bev Bond 03 5952 3096

WRAAC LUNCHEON / WEBSITE LAUNCH Saturday 26th July 2008



Patron Jessie Perkins was presented with a framed image of an AWAS & WRAAC badge.

A great time was had by all at the luncheon and website launch held at The International of Brighton on the 26th July 2008. The chilly Melbourne morning did not detract from warmth of the day as our girls began to arrive at the venue with lots of hugs and friendly exchanges setting the tone of the reunion.

We reacquainted ourselves with old friends and welcomed quite a number of new faces. Several of our girls travelled from interstate and country Victoria to be with us. We observed a minute silence in memory of fellow servicewomen who are no longer with us but remain in our thoughts. There were a few absences due to illness and we wish Ruth Durance, Gnaire Foster and Brenda Johnson all the best for a speedy recovery.

The website launch was a great success in the capable hands of Heather Fry and Ella Brown. Members acknowledged the need for more information to make our site an interesting account of WRAAC history. Our much loved Patron Jessie Perkins was presented with a framed image of an AWAS and WRAAC badge placed side by side depicting Jessie's contribution to the Association and her many years of service. Jessie was then invited to cut the Association cake and then rejoined her table where she appeared to be having a great time until we started to sing "Give a Shout Give a Cheer" (you know who comes a knocking at the door).

Our Chaplain Rev Bill and Mrs Lesley Pugh were able to join us this year and we love having them share our special day. Joan Johnstone, Iris Petrass and Jean Evans proposed the toasts with the Rev Bill Pugh saying Grace.

Gwenda Walker presented six girls with a Certificate of Appreciation from the Association; it was an honour to receive the certificate from Gwenda as she has been a significant contributor to our Association for many years.

The lucky table prizes consisted of a wine glass emblazoned with a gold WRAAC badge and a small bottle of champers, the winners were delighted with their surprise gifts. We also enjoyed

another fabulous raffle and our thanks to all for your participation.

The Association has had lots of feedback regarding the Luncheon and Website, our thanks to you all for making it such a happy and memorable day. We look forward to your company next year.



WEBSITE LAUNCH 26th July 2008 www.wraacvic.com



Heather Fry presents the Website.

It was our pleasure to officially launch the website of WRAAC Association (Vic) Inc. at our annual luncheon on July 26th at the International of Brighton. The response we had after the launch was very positive and quite overwhelming. To those of you who were not able to attend the luncheon we invite you to log onto our website, we are confident you will not be disappointed. In setting up the website we realise that not all members would have immediate access to a computer but they maybe able to view our website with the assistance of family and friends or even the local library.

It is our aim to keep the website updated with the WRAAC history as well as current information that is of interest to all our members. To assist us we do need input from our members, photos, stories etc. of when you were in the army, in fact anything that you may consider would be of interest. On some of our website pages we have a "Post Comment" section and we invite you to send us your comments. Our website is in its early stages and more pages will progressively be added making our website even more interesting, so don't forget to frequently go back and revisit our website.

Our newsletter is also on the website; as a result of this we are asking members if they would like to download their copy of the newsletter direct from the website therefore assisting us greatly with printing and postage costs. If you intend to download the newsletter from our website please advise our membership secretary, Diane Sherry (dishe1946@yahoo.com.au). Once the newsletter is complete and on the website emails will be sent to all members who opt for this method of receiving the newsletter, advising them that the latest newsletter is available.

We sincerely thank the people who donated funds for us to set up the website. The sum of \$710.00 was raised which covered the initial setting up of the website and will also assist us with the annual fees of keeping the website running. Our thanks are also extended to our webmaster, Clive Budd for his time and generosity, as well as to Ella Brown who has now taken over the role of webmaster.

We hope you all enjoy our website, share it with your family and friends and revisit constantly and watch the website grow.

Send photos/stories etc. to:

Heather Fry
189 Rawdon Hill Drive
DANDENONG NORTH 3175
Email: hfray44@bigpond.com

Website Sub Committee: Jude Pinkerton-Treloar
Cheryle Brown
Heather Fry

AWAS LUNCHEON AND AGM 13TH August 2008

To celebrate the 67th Anniversary of the formation of the Australian Women's Army Service a luncheon was held on the 13th August 2008 at Legacy House, Swanston Street Melbourne.

The girls attending the luncheon had a great day as the new venue was an excellent choice as it catered for all our needs including access to public transport.

Jessie Perkins and the committee were returned for another year unopposed.

If you wish to join the AWAS Association contact Gwenda Walker on 03 9801 2712.

Check our newsletter for next luncheon date.

With the sudden interest in Australian Women and their contribution to Australia's Defence during War and Peace, we have always known our girls are special and should be treasured; funny it has taken the rest of Australia over 60 years to catch on.
Editor

MY WAR YEARS By Joan Johnstone

We hope you enjoy Joan Johnstone's story in our newsletter. It's an insight into a young Australian's life as her nation endures the war years 1939-45. Joan is a much loved and respected member of the Association and our thanks to her for sharing Her memories with us. (See attachment 2)

AROUND THE WRAAC PACK

Our thoughts and prayers are with our Patron Jessie Perkins as she begins her treatment this month.

To Mrs Dark, Margaret's mother, our best wishes to you from the Association. The girls have fond memories of Mrs Dark and her name is always mentioned when we get together.

To Mrs Jones, Val's mother we extend our best wishes from the Association.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Cheryl Doolan (Bell)	3 WRAAC Coy
Denise Tyler (Wells)	3 WRAAC Coy
Pauline van Trienen (Strugnell)	10 WRAAC Coy
Heather Sherry (McKay)	3 WRAAC Coy

BIRTHDAYS

Our Secretary Cheryle (Howes) Brown celebrated her 60th birthday in July. Cheryle enjoyed a night out with her WRAAC mates.

ON THE MEND

Ruth Durance reports to be on track for a full recovery after recent hip surgery.

Brenda Johnson looked stunning and appears to be back to full health after her recent illness. We caught up with Brenda at the AWAS Luncheon on 13th August.

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 contact a committee member (telephone numbers on front cover) or our Chaplain Rev. William (Bill) Pugh – Editor

COMMUNICATION FROM MEMBERS

It was so good to hear from Ann (Woodsy) Wood and she is well and happily living in country Victoria. Ann wishes everyone all the best and will catch up at next year's luncheon.

Our warm wishes to Meagan Fry daughter of Heather (History Co-ordinator) and Hugh Fry on her recent visit to Uganda. Meagan was one of nine paramedic students selected for this trip to a country where the life expectancy for men is 48 years and for women it is 51 years.

On the 1st July 2008, as part of a dedicated team of nine paramedic students and one lecturer, Meagan travelled to a small rural town in Eastern Uganda to provide humanitarian aid and medical assistance at the local hospital and town health centre. It is staggering to learn that only 38.4% of health care staff posts are filled in Uganda, hence the health and medical needs of the Ugandan people rely heavily on volunteer work and international aid.

Well done Meagan we are so very proud of you.

To answer your question, Meagan is just like her mother in many ways but can't vouch for the driving. Editor

If you have enjoyed a trip away please let us know – we all enjoy your travel news – Editor

MEMBERSHIP

We would like YOU to contact any ladies whom you may know who were in the Army (CMF Ares and ARA) regarding joining the Association. Please contact our Membership Officer Diane Sherry on 9478 1073 or email at dishe1946@yahoo.com.au and she will post out the appropriate form.

Could you let Diane Sherry know if you have an Email address? Her contact details are listed above.

AUSTRALIAN ARMY BAND MELBOURNE UP COMING CONCERTS

**At Home Concerts: Simpson Barracks Crew
Street Gate Entry (Melways Map 20 E9)**
Crew Street gate opens 10am on the morning of the concert.

Pre-booked groups will not be issued tickets.

Please notify the person on the gate which group you belong to.
Individuals will be issued a ticket (those not part of a pre-booked group)

- 3 Sep 08 Battle for Australia service at Shrine of Remembrance 11is
- 5 Sep 08 'At Home' Concert with Defence Force School of Music (DFSM), Newman Hall, Simpson Barracks 11am.
- 19 Sep 08 'At Home' Concert with DFSM at Simpson Barracks 11am
- 26 Sep 08 That one day in September, the AFL Grand Final Parade. Starts at Melbourne Arts Centre and finishes At Parliament House, Spring Street.
- 17 Oct 08 'At Home' Concert with DFSM at Simpson Barracks 11am
- 7 Nov 08 Army in Concert, Hamer Hall
Featuring Guy Sebastian. 8pm

Book through Ticketmaster
1300 136 166.



SHRINE NEWS

COMMEMORATIVE STAINED GLASS WINDOWS EXHIBITION Eastern Visitor Centre 30th May - September 2008

Curated by Bronwyn Hughes, who has recently completed her doctorate on stained glass windows, this exhibition includes sketch designs, photographs and watercolours demonstrating the wealth of memorials that have been created in this medium to those who died in the First World War. These have often been the result of commissions by the families of lost service men and women. The exhibition focuses on the work of William Montgomery between 1915 and 1927.

GENERAL SIR JOHN MONASH EXHIBITION Western Visitor Centre 9th February – September 2008

This exhibition of black and white photographs, from the collection of the Australian War Memorial, documents the military career of Sir John Monash. A bronze portrait bust of Monash by Paul Montford and Monash's First World War tin hat have been added to this fine display. Memorabilia, an audio visual and additional text linking Monash to the Shrine are included in this exhibition to commemorate the 90th anniversary of Australia's military service on the Western Front in 1918.

BATTLE OF BEERSHEBA 31 October 1917 91st Anniversary Eastern Visitor Centre 12th September 2008 – 8th February 2009

Historical memorabilia borrowed from Victorian families and private collectors will be combined with images from the collection of the Australian War Memorial to tell the story of the charge at Beersheba, of the units and the men who were there and the circumstances in which it occurred. This exhibition will be enhanced by the inclusion of contemporary drawings by artist Susan McMinn whose work is focussed on the horse as warrior.

PEACE 90th Anniversary of Armistice Day 1918 Western Visitor Centre 3rd October 2008 – 1st February 2009

On 11th November each year we continue to celebrate peace among those countries that fought as allies during the First World War (1914-18). The story of the signing of the surrender on 11th November 1918 after six years of war will be told and responses to this great day around the world in 1918 will be explored. The evolution of Armistice Day, later renamed in Australia as Remembrance Day, has since provided the occasion for many important events including the dedication of the Shrine of Remembrance.

Shrine Web Site:

For all information about Shrine programs visit the website at www.shrine.org.au

Telephone (03) 9654 8415

FOR THE DIARY AUGUST – NOVEMBER 2008

31 st August 2008	Reserve Forces Day	Check RFD Website
4 th October 2008	WRAAC Association (Vic) Inc. AGM	Education Centre Shrine of Remembrance
11 th October 2008	WRAAC Social Group	Luncheon at Orrong Hotel
22nd November 2008	Council of Ex-servicewomen's Pilgrimage to the Cairn and Luncheon	Luncheon at English Speaking Union

- ATTACHMENT:**
- 1. Attendance and nomination form for AGM**
 - 2. My War Years by Joan Johnstone**

**WOMEN'S ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION
(VICTORIA) INCORPORATED**

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Saturday 4th October 2008
Starting at 11.00am
Education Centre
Shrine of Remembrance
Melbourne.**

NOMINATION FORM

Position:

Nomination: (Name)

Nominated by: (Name)

Seconded by: (Name)

I accept the nomination (Signature).....

To reach the Secretary by the 27th September 2008 (one week before AGM)

Secretary
Women's Royal Australia Army Corps Association (Vic) Inc.
Post Office Box 307
SAN REMO VIC 3925

I will be attending AGM on Saturday 4th October 2008.
Name

.....

Signature

Attachment 2.

MY WAR YEARS JOAN JOHNSTONE AWAS VF387885

When Australia declared war against Germany on the 3rd of September 1939 - 63 years ago this month - neither our political or service leaders envisaged a time when Australian womanhood would be called upon to volunteer as members of the Australian Commonwealth Military Forces.

It was entirely due to the threatened invasion of our country, that the Australian Government finally admitted that there needed to be the creation of womens' services, so that more men could be released for active duty to our near north, and young women could serve in the areas of draughtswomen, mechanics - tele-communications, anti-aircraft, coastal artillery and fixed defences; wireless telegraph operators, and cooks. Instrument operators in coastal artillery and anti-aircraft. Performing the duties of male personnel grouped as operators-signals, wireless, line and switchboard. Messwomen, office orderlies etc.....

Australian Army Nurses served in South Africa during the Boer War, and in the Aegean Islands, Egypt, France and England during World War 1. Australian Nurses were aboard the Transport "BALLARAT" when it was torpedoed on the 26th April 1917.

In World War II, Australian Army Nursing Service nurses began their work in Middle East hospitals in 1940, and were followed by 200 VAD girls. These VAD's were absorbed into AMWAS, formed in 1942. We remember still the awful massacre of 22 members of the Australian Army Nurses, with other survivors from the SS VYNER BROOKE, on Banka Island, Straits of Sumatra. The only survivor from this party of 23 Nurses was Sister Vivian Bullwinkel. That happened on the 16th February 1942.

The horror of the thought of invasion of our land Australia, by the Imperial Japanese Army, hung over us all in a heavy cloud. At one point they were just 300 miles from our northern shores. One half of the distance between Melbourne and Sydney.

In 1941 the three women's services were formed. The WRANS - Women's Royal Naval Service; the WAAAF - the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force; and the AWAS - the Australian Women's Army Service.

I chose to join the Army, the AWAS, as my Dad had joined the Army in June 1940. In July, he would have been "too old" at the age of 40 - he got in whilst he was 39 years old. His number was VX42045, and he was Sapper Harry Woodhead of the 2/10th Field Company, Royal Australian Engineers.AIF. He became a POW with the Fall of Singapore in February, 1942.

I applied in May 1942, and was inducted into the AWAS on the 6th June 1942. I attended rookies school at Glamorgan in Toorak, the 6th of the AWAS rookie schools. The course lasted just 2 weeks; and I was posted, on the 20th June 1942 to the 2nd Aust Army Headquarters, Command Pay-Masters Office, which at this time was encamped at Long Island Golf Course, Frankston. The Paymaster's Office was in the clubhouse, and the men were in tents around the golf course. The girls of the AWAS; there were just 5 of us to start with, were lodged in guest houses around the area in Frankston. Because I lived just a few miles away in Bonbeach, I was billeted at my home. My Mum was delighted with the extra food coupons and the living-at-home allowance that I was granted.

I was the operator of the small switchboard in the Paymaster's office. I had operated a switchboard when working with the Australian Women's Weekly, prior to my enlistment.

(2)

In August of '42, we were moved north to Parramatta, NSW, and with a few more girls from Melbourne and on arriving in NSW, we were allocated about 25 Sydney girls, and so we became a very efficient group.

I was transferred from the switchboard to train as a typiste, and as a result of this, I was graded Group 2 Stenographer and was appointed Acting Corporal in December '42. This was confirmed on 8 February '43.

The Command Paymaster was responsible in all matters pertaining to the payments of allotments and allowances of all men under the umbrella of the 2nd Australian Army, which at that time, included all of the men - officers and other ranks in the Australian Army who were grouping for New Guinea and other areas up North. Quite a formidable task, and he had a group of supporting officers who had been accountants and bank managers and staff in civilian life.

Included in the duties were applications for leave, compassionate and sometimes special requests to be at home for births of babies, to be with sick wives or mothers, with many a funeral to attend - all of those situations when a man felt a great need to be at home. Most of these requests had to be refused, and so we had to take care of the blokes who went AWL. And who could blame some of them - they had nearly all been overseas in the Middle East, come home to an all too brief leave, and now had been herded off again.

However they were under military law, and so we followed them through the military tribunals and whatever punishments were meted out. Mostly they came back to camp as soon as the personal difficulty was relieved; and we all know that there is no better soldier than the Australian man, no matter what service he is in.

The 2nd Aust Army Headquarters moved much further North in April of '43, and I was posted back to Melbourne. I went to a Finance Branch which at that time was in what was called "the old Repat building" on the corner almost adjacent to Victoria Barracks: but a short time later I requested a transfer and was posted to Australian Army Education, and to the office of the Army Journal SALT.

SALT, the authorised journal of the Australian Army Education Service; from its inception invited and published original poetry, stories and art work from serving members of the forces. The staff members were drawn from the journalists, sports writers and political writers who had been on the staff of newspapers from both sides of the political arena, had served in forward and front line areas and now wrote for the benefit of serving members, detailing all aspects of the wars progress, what was happening on "the home front" and what was being done in the areas of post-war rehabilitation. A question and answer section drew a lot of mail, as did the playing of chess and other games articles. And the publication grew from a weekly 32 page publication to a fortnightly 64 pages each issue.

Called SALT - because Salt is significant as an essential to life and a symbol of honour and friendship. Also since SALT was to be distributed among one in three of all ranks and passed from hand to hand, it was considered that "Pass the SALT" was appropriate.

In January 1946 I received my third stripe. I was a Sergeant. Back in October 1945, my Dad came home on the Hospital Ship ORANJI. He was well and recovered quickly from his years as a POW, although the strong bonds of mateship never quite faded, even up to the time of his death in 1981. Through my service, firstly with the Command Paymaster and later with SALT I had come to understand the strong commitment of the Australian Serviceman - of their love of mates, and their country; of their longing for peace, home and kids.

And I came to love them.