



WRAAC ASSOCIATION (VICTORIA) INC.

2 Gilbank Street
RESERVOIR VIC 3073

Telephone: 0408 553 412 Website: www.wraacvic.com

NEWSLETTER

September 2012 – No 3/2012

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

Here we are on the home stretch of another year for the Association and the thought of a happy and busy Christmas period ahead of us.

It was good to catch up with members who joined us on Reserve Forces Day in July. Thank you for your attendance on such a cold but memorable day. We look forward to many former members joining us next year to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the formation of the WRAAC CMF.

Remember the AGM will be held at the Shrine of Remembrance on Saturday the 10th November 2012 at 1100 hours, following the meeting refreshments will be served. Look forward to seeing you there.

Yours in friendship,

Heather (Rankin) Fry

Editorial

As we read our Newsletter in the safe confines of our home we can't help but be moved by the enormous sense of loss we are experiencing as together we mourn the passing of five more Australians in Afghanistan. As former service personnel we understand the anger and confusion displayed by all levels of media and to a certain extent the general public as they attempt to justify our role in the area. If you remember the volatile Vietnam War years as public anger gained momentum that in turn did irrevocable damage to so many of our returned members, we never want to go down that path again. However, as members of the ADF understand it is not their place to question, they are deployed by the Government of the day and go wherever they elect to send them, that is their role.

As previous generations of Australians have done before them they will gain strength from each other as they continue to finish the job at hand.

The sadness we feel at the loss of our boys, one can only but imagine the pain and grief felt by their bereaved families. To them we say, we acknowledge your sacrifice and honour your courage. Editor

Lest We Forget

ARISING FROM OUR COMMITTEE MEETING

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

1100hrs Saturday 10th November 2012

The Annual General Meeting will be held at 1100 hrs on Saturday 10th November 2012, at the Shrine of Remembrance Education Centre. All Committee positions are declared vacant. (See Attachment #1)

Following the AGM tea, coffee and light refreshments will be available. For catering purposes please contact Diane Sherry telephone 0408 553 412 or email dishe1946@yahoo.com.au if you intend to join us.

COUNCIL OF EX-SERVICEWOMENS CAIRN

Once again we will gather at the Commemorative Cairn at 1100hrs on 24th November 2012 to remember those who are no longer with us. Following a brief wreath laying service we will then proceed to the Botanical Hotel for lunch.

This is not an organised event so if you wish to join us for lunch: contact Jude Pinkerton-Treloar on (03) 9874 7915 by 16th November 2012 for catering purposes.

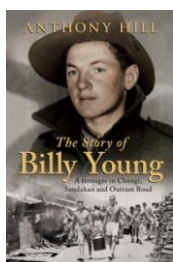
SANDAKAN COMMEMORATIVE SERVICE

The Bendigo District RSL Sub-Branch will conduct its Annual Commemorative Service on Sunday 10th March 2013 at 11am, honouring all servicemen who lost their lives whilst a Prisoner of War at Sandakan and Kuching, North Borneo and the infamous Sandakan–Ranau Death Marches.

If you require more information contact the Bendigo RSL Office on (03) 5443 4013 between the hours of 12-4pm Monday to Friday.

The Commemorative service is held over the Labour Day weekend so it is a wonderful excuse to pay a visit to Historical Bendigo.

**The Story of Billy Young
A Teenager in Changi,
Sandakan and Outram
Road
By Anthony Hill
Published by Viking.**



This book was extremely difficult to put down as it tells the story of survival and courage by a remarkable young man named Billy Young. The reader follows Billy as he enlists in to the Australian Army in 1941 with the promise of three meals a day and five bob a week. We are aghast at his subsequent capture by the Japanese at the age of 16 years following the fall of Singapore and the sheer hell he is forced to endure. This book is specific in detail as we are compelled to face the reality of man's inhumanity to man.

I found this book confronting, tragic and yet inspiring.

The RRP is \$29.99 but managed to purchase mine for \$20 at Woolworths (Big W). Ed

WRAAC SOCIAL GROUP PUB LUNCH

You are invited to join us for another pleasant afternoon catching up with old friends.

Details :

Place: The Orrong Hotel
Address: Cnr Orrong & High Streets Armadale
Date: Saturday, 6 October 2012
Time: 12.00 pm onwards
Cost: Depends on what you order from the menu.

You order and pay for your food and drinks as required.

For those travelling by private transport, car parking is on-the-street. It is easy to reach by public transport, the number 6 tram is the one to catch from Swanston Street, City. The Toorak Station is also very close to the Orrong Hotel which can be found at Melway reference Map 58 J:7. Please contact us by Wednesday, 3 October 2012 as we need to confirm the numbers attending.

We look forward to seeing you on the 6 October 2012, if you have any questions, give us a call.

Liz Maclaine Lyn Board Bev Bond
03 9397 1043 03 5989 2553 03 5952 3096

Expression of interest!

Did you spend time at 31 WRAAC Barracks, St Kilda Road, Melbourne?

Would you like to attend a Reunion at the Old Barracks now known as the Hotel Charsfield? If this interests you please contact Helen (McLeod) Meyer for further information. Her email is helenm@adam.com.au or telephone 08 7007 8575.

EX-WRANS ASSOCIATION (VIC) INC

**Christmas Luncheon
Saturday 15th December 2012**

The Ex-Wrans Association wish to extend an invitation to members of the WRAAC Association to attend our Christmas luncheon, at Bayview on the Park, 52 Queens Road, Melbourne on the 15th December 2012.

Cost: \$40.00 per head and drinks at bar prices
Time: 12 noon
RSVP: 31st October 2012

Please make cheque or money order payable to Ex-Wrans Association (Vic) Inc.

Please advise if there are any dietary requirements.

Send payment to Carol Farr, 3 Denise Court, Viewbank Vic 3084

LTCOL Beverley Blanksby AM RFD ED Award

Did you know there is an award named in honour of the late Bev Blanksby at Monash University Regiment (Mon UR)?

This yearly award is granted to a soldier who displays the qualities of our much loved and respected former member of the WRAAC.

The nominee is graded on specific selection points including; Loyalty, Dedication, Duty, Efficiency, Leadership, Supportive (Providing encouragement), Friendship (person who supports another), A Team Player and Accessibility.

The award is for Other Ranks and highlights the strength of the late LTCOL Blanksby and the benchmark for those aspiring to lead.

Good call Julia

It would appear the Gillard Government has been shamed into backing down on cutbacks to family reunion travel for single service personnel over the age of 21. Until the May 2012 budget all service personnel were entitled to one free annual flight home when at their base in Australia. It should be noted married members qualify for some tax payer funded family re-union trips back home each year therefore this move appeared to discriminate against single career soldiers. Our Pollies waste money on so many failed projects made this latest cut mean spirited. It impacted heavily on the morale of Service personnel and their families. Why do this to save \$15million per year and affect 22,000 very special Australians!

Too Late For Tears!

The morning TV chat show that appeared to denigrate the character of our recent VC recipient, SAS Cpl Ben Roberts-Smith has been cancelled by Network Ten. This could be due to in part to consumer outrage regarding the content of the show on that particular day. Freedom of speech is a privilege not to be abused. The circle is complete.



WAR MEMORIAL UPDATE



Michael Zavros a talented young Australian Artist has been commissioned by the War Memorial to paint Victoria Cross recipient Ben Roberts-Smith. We look forward to seeing the finished work in Canberra.

Budget Cut Backs to Defence

With Defence spending allegedly the lowest since 1938 we could ask "What's going on?"

Governments must make long term plans to invest in the security of Australia, cutbacks make this almost non-existent and a huge worry for all Australians. The spending cuts have made us vulnerable and extremely short sighted.

RESERVE FORCES DAY

Shrine of Remembrance, Melbourne.
Sunday 1st July 2012

Melbourne Parade Sunday 1st July 2012

What could possibly tempt former WRAAC CMF/ARES members to form up at Government House Drive on a chilly Sunday morning in Melbourne? It's quite simple really, all were lined up to participate in the annual Reserve Forces Day Parade. This small but dedicated group stepped off at approximately 1020hrs with Standard Bearer Margie Jager struggling to breath with a chest infection.

The girls appeared to be in step as the pounding rain encouraged all to pick up the beat. The perfect start to a parade!



However, as we regained our composure and contained the flight reflex we began our ascent to the Shrine Forecourt. All in readiness for the eyes right at the eternal flame. Lorraine Onans had the honour of being our Banner Bearer and proudly took her place on the steps of the Shrine with other Services and Corps. Well done Lorraine.



As we marched to the stirring sound of "Soldiers of the Queen" we heard invited guests say "here come the girls, they know how to March!" The surprise was that the choice of music was not for us but in recognition of Boer War Descendants. (Remember the theme music to Breaker Morant?) We knew it was ours and harmony was restored once again within the group.

The RAAF band was wonderful and continued to perform as the chilly wind taunted them, guests huddled together to keep warm, similar to the memorable scene in the original Titanic movie.

As insurance the Association procured ponchos and as we stood at ease a few of us attempted to place the aforementioned piece of plastic over our rain soaked bodies. Jude lost it when her head would not fit through the opening meant for arms and was efficiently helped by Gill Metz who always appears to be there when we need her.

Former WRAAC members were indeed indispensable on the day. Cheryle Brown was observed assisting with the seating of Official Guests minus her usual clip board, Diane Sherry was totally involved handing medallion cards to recipients prior to the commencement of the ceremony. Heather Fry must have a double as she seemed to be everywhere.

Our Official guests were Captain Iris Petrass, (Patron of the WRAAC Association Victoria) and Captain Gwenda Walker (President of the AWAS Association Victoria and a former member of the WRAAC). It was noted Major Maggie More was also an Official Guest representing The Shrine of Remembrance and was observed wearing her WRAAC Beret with pride. We are so fortunate in Victoria to have the Shrine as our special place to hold such events.

Major General David McLachlan AO was the Reviewing Officer and appeared to forget women served in the CMF/ARES as he addressed the assembled parade but quickly recovered to mention females in his last sentence. 2012 and it would appear nothing has changed!

This year there was a static vehicle display on the Northern Forecourt of the Shrine consisting of 6 vintage variants, 2 new G wagons (this was their first public appearance) and an operational Wiles Cooker. Heather Fry went to great lengths to find the cooker and it was worth all her hard work, as it was a significant part of our Military History in keeping our troops well fed and happy. The only thing missing was the scones and tea.

Next year is the 60th Anniversary of the formation of the WRAAC CMF so it is expected that a large number of former members of the Corps will be in attendance to acknowledge our service to Australia.

Ponchos will be provided with instructions!

Note: Photos courtesy of Gill Metz.

WRAAC ANNUAL LUNCHEON

Saturday 21st July 2012

Melbourne turned on its charm with a sunny winter day to welcome 60 members, friends and carers to our much loved luncheon. This year was a happy occasion with lots of catching up with dear friends, reflecting on times past. Our Guest Speaker, Mr Neale Sharkey (Shrine of Remembrance Curator) talked about his role at the Shrine and our recent Exhibition to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the Formation of the WRAAC.



A presentation was made to WO1 Elizabeth Gibson on her 30 years of service to the Association, our only Treasurer in all that time. Elizabeth retired from the position in 2011 and this was a fitting tribute to her.

A surprise on the day was a presentation to past and present Committee members to thank them for their contribution to the Association. Margaret Jager and Carol King have a lot to answer for their role in this covert operation. A sincere thankyou to the girls involved in the making and presentation of the framed certificates.

We all loved the beautiful green silk pashminas as our memento, a great gift.

We finished the day with the singing of Land of Hope and Glory in tribute to HM Queen Elizabeth's Diamond Jubilee year. There were streamers and poppers on the table to throw as we finished singing, a great end to a terrific day!

The professional staff at the Brighton ensured our day was a success and we thank them sincerely. See you there next year.

You just had to be there to see!

WO1 Elizabeth Gibson's look of astonishment as she was escorted to the podium to receive her thank you gift.

The beautiful pashminas we received as a memento of the day, they looked stunning.

Good friends having a great time together.

Our much loved and respected AWAS sisters joining in the fun.

The pride we feel when we see our Banner paraded by members in Green Berets.

The reaction to the sound of our Corps March.

How good we all look after catching up with friends and sharing happy stories together.

AROUND THE WRAAC PACK

THINKING OF YOU

May Brooks

Best wishes to our good friend May, we are thinking of you.

SICK PARADE

On the mend.

Cheryle Brown is feeling much better following her recent surgery and will be back on Parade very soon.

Cheryle wishes to thank everyone for their best wishes and messages of support.

Joan Johnston.

It was good to see Joan at the AWAS luncheon in August looking fit and well following her recent spell in hospital.

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



BABY NEWS

Congratulations to Sheryl English and Family on the arrival of a beautiful Grandson Henry James English at Sale Hospital on June 13th 2012. Our best wishes to all. Sheryl was unable to attend our WRAAC luncheon this year as she was on a 3 week tour of Turkey with her Air Cadets, all part of the International Air Cadet Exchange. Our girl is certainly a busy woman as she was only back in Australia for a few days then headed off to England for a holiday. Hope you had a great trip Girlfriend!

Our best wishes to the Blanksby family with the happy news a second Grandchild is due in December.

Lady Soldiers

(Appeared in Army Newspaper 21st June 2012)

Women tell their stories of service

Lady Soldiers

Documentary

By Lyn Kane Dale
and Samantha Bergersen

RRP: \$30

Reviewer: John Wellfare

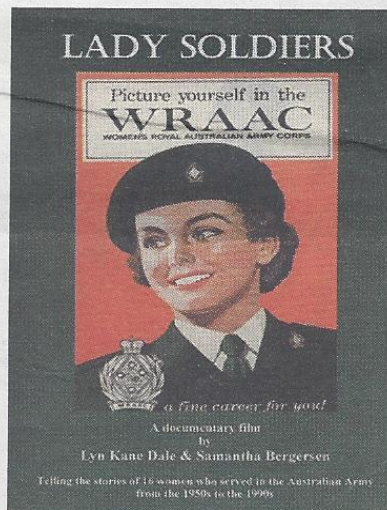
AS THE Army approaches the lifting of gender restrictions on all roles, it's interesting to note that women were once restricted to serving in either the Women's Royal Australian Army Corps (WRAAC) or the Royal Australian Army Nursing Corps.

Lady Soldiers, a new documentary by former WRAAC member Lyn Kane Dale and film maker Samantha Bergersen, explores this recent history through the stories of 16 of the more than 10,000 women who joined the WRAAC and the Nursing Corps between 1951 and 1985. It follows the women from enlistment, through basic training, their careers and discharge.

Most of the women featured joined the Army during the 1960s and the gender inequalities of the times come through in their stories.

Like most men and women who have ever joined the Army, the women featured in *Lady Soldiers* signed up for independence, adventure or to carry on strong family traditions of military service. Listening to their stories, viewers can feel the frustration of women who enlisted for these reasons and spent their first postings after basic training washing dishes in a mess.

WRAAC members had to be single – because according to the Army of the time a married woman's place was in the home – so many



of the women featured in the film were forced to discharge when they wanted to marry.

Some of the women experienced bullying and discrimination in their careers – beyond the basic discrimination of only being allowed to serve in two corps – but their attitudes to their military service are mostly upbeat and most of them seem to feel the experience was a positive one.

Their stories serve as a reminder of how far the Army has come since World War II. One can imagine a day in the future when people look back and wonder how we ever thought it was okay to restrict women from any role, even combat roles, on the basis of their gender.

The documentary presentation can take a few minutes to settle in for viewers. Because of a lack of available material and an obviously tight budget, the visuals are comprised entirely of photos, not video.

Filmmaker Bergersen has done a

good job keeping movement on the screen with gentle zooms and pans over photos as the voices of the 16 women tell their stories, so it's more than a photo gallery with a soundtrack.

It's a shame the budget didn't allow for all 16 women's stories to be filmed in studio interviews, as this would have broken up the photos and made it easier to keep track of each person's story as it unfolded throughout the film.

The film starts with all the women's experiences on joining, then their experiences at recruit training, then first postings and so on. It makes sense to present the stories in this way, rather than telling them in full one after the other, but without a filmed interview to fall back on, it can be a struggle to reconnect with an individual's story as it comes and goes throughout the documentary.

For this reason viewers will probably find themselves getting a better understanding of the stories after watching the film a second or third time.

It's a forgivable flaw in *Lady Soldiers* because it's clear the film makers were working to a tight budget with an ambitious project.

Lady Soldiers will undoubtedly bring back memories for former WRAAC members and is worth a look for anyone interested in hearing the stories of "ordinary people" during this interesting period in Australian military history.

Lady Soldiers is available on DVD for \$30. Contact Lyn Kane Dale on lyn.dale99a@yahoo.com to order a copy.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Mrs Robyn Abbey (nee Ellis) ARA 1973-75 CARO
 1975-76 1RVR
 F35660 1976-78 SME
 Annual Member 1981-82 11 Trg Gp
 1982- ?? 5 RVR
 2 MD PD

Mrs Anne Morrissy (nee Hower) AWAS 1943-46 Q Branch
 VF515598 Canteens
 Annual Member

Ms Katherine Burgess ARA 1974-76 MelbTpt
 (nee Egan) Unit
 F35821
 Annual Member

Mrs Alice Kaufmann AWAS 1942-47 2 Ech Vic
 (nee Pigdon) DAPM
 VF395715
 Annual Member

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

Could you let Diane Sherry know if you have an Email address and if you are able to access the Newsletter on the website? Her contact details are listed above.

Can You Help

We have lost contact with some of our life members. Can you help us to locate the following members:

CPL Dorothy Berry
 Mrs Brenda Boswell (nee Booth)
 Ms Shirley Brown
 Ms Marilyn Dell
 Ms Robyn Gibson (nee Vincent)
 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.

FOR THE DIARY OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2012

6 th October 2012	WRAAC Social Group Pub Lunch	Orrong Hotel, Cnr Orrong and High Streets Armadale
10 th November 2012	WRAAC AGM	Shrine of Remembrance, Education Room Birdwood Ave Melbourne
24 th November 2012	informal gathering at Council of Ex-servicewomen's Memorial Cairn	Shrine of Remembrance Birdwood Ave Melbourne
15 th December 2012	EX-WRANS Association (Vic) Inc, Christmas Lunch	Bayview on the Park, 52 Queens Road, Melbourne

ATTACHMENT #1: AGM Nomination Form



WOMEN'S ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION (VICTORIA) INC.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday 10th November 2012
Starting at 1100 hrs
Education Centre
Shrine of Remembrance
Melbourne.

NOMINATION FORM

(Please Print)

I (your name) Being a financial member of the
Association, nominate

(Name)..... 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, 2 Gilbank Street, Reservoir Vic 3073, by Friday
5th November 2012.

Only financial Members may nominate, second, or be nominated

Secretary's use only

Date Received All Financial Yes / No

Diane Sherry
Secretary