



Women's Royal Army Corps Association Impact Report 2026

Celebrating and Supporting Female Veterans

Vision

To provide camaraderie, benevolence and mutual support to former members of the ATS and WRAC, and exert influence within the military charity sector to broaden support for female veterans.



On Armistice Day, the Bank of England held its Remembrance service with members of the WRAC Association taking an active role as Pauline Milnes read the Kohima. The Act of Remembrance took place at the Bank of England War Memorial in the internal Garden Court.

Vice President Col (Ret'd) Amanda Hassell



It is my privilege to introduce this year's annual impact report, reflecting a period marked by both poignant moments and significant progress. In this Grand Reunion year, we had an excellent turnout for the Annual General Meeting, where we welcomed Major General Tim Hyams, CB, OBE of the Army Benevolent Fund, and bid 'farewell' to Brig Fiona Gardner CBE as I took on the role of Vice President, and to Reverend Sue Wing, welcoming serving officer Reverend Trudy Hobson as our new padre.

The launch of the Female Veterans Toolkit took place at the Royal Hospital Chelsea, bringing together key stakeholders and individuals who will champion the recognition of female veterans. I am particularly grateful to those of our members who contributed to the project. Designed to promote understanding of female veterans' issues and to support a wide range of service providers, this resource will equip stakeholders with practical tools and guidance to meet evolving needs and celebrate the service of women in the Armed Forces. We look forward to seeing its positive impact in years to come.



Our association took a leading role in the important work of restoring berets and cap badges to women whose service was impacted by the pre-2000 ban on LGBT serving personnel. Ceremonies were held in Guildford, Cardiff and the National Memorial Arboretum with Army representation from Brigadier Melissa Emmett MBE and Brigadier Clare Phillips CBE who both delivered a heartfelt and sincere apology. We are particularly

proud to have played our part in welcoming these women back into the wider veteran community and specifically into the WRAC Association.

Our members were deeply saddened by the passing of our esteemed President and former Colonel Commandant of the Women's Royal Army Corps, Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent. Attending the requiem mass in London alongside Life Vice President Sue Westlake MBE to pay respects on behalf of the Association, we reflected on her five decades of loyal service to our corps and her unswerving dedication to female veterans, a dedication we are proud to continue.

Chief Executive Officer Paula Rogers



In a year of significant anniversaries and enhanced visibility for female veterans, the WRAC Association has remained at the forefront of the work to celebrate women who served. The summer saw us elected for another three-year period to sit on the Executive Board of Cobseo: The Confederation of Service Charities. We are proud to have the support of our peers, particularly those single cap badge associations who voted for us to represent their distinct views.

Engagement with the Ministry of Defence and Office for Veterans' Affairs allows us to ensure women's issues and contributions are communicated directly to those shaping policy and future veteran provision, and we have been pleased to have been consulted on the new veterans strategy and see that the strategic themes of "celebrate, contribute, support" will directly benefit the women we work hard to champion.



Our impact report reflects on our achievements throughout the year and the ways in which the WRAC Association continues to work hard for female veterans, from individuals needing help or companionship, to wide-reaching delivery which will improve outcomes for significant numbers of women for years to come. We are proud to be The Servicewomen's Charity.



Minister for Veterans and People Louise Sandher-Jones MP, with our programme lead Liza Jarvis and Life Vice President Col Ali Brown OBE



Director of the Office for Veterans Affairs Anisha Worbs attending our launch of the Female Veterans Toolkit



Our dedicated staff team are supported by volunteers who organise local events and maintain contact with isolated veterans, as well as supporting our charity's strong governance. Our volunteer contingent comprises civilians, serving personnel and scores of veterans who continue to serve those who served.



Being an area coordinator definitely keeps me on my toes! Everyone brings their own energy, and something unique to the table - that's what makes it so enjoyable. I love doing my bit for the WRAC Association, it's not just about helping out, it's about being part of a community that really feels like home.

Dawn Hawker WRAC 1980 - 1983

I have the honour of chairing the committee which organises the annual WRAC Gala Dinner Club event and have completed cycle challenges to raise much needed funds. My dulcet tones can also be heard calling the step as we march at the Cenotaph each year.

Karen "Radders" Radford WRAC 1987-1992, RAMC 1992 - 1993



I really enjoy volunteering as a branch organiser, bringing together ladies who served in the WRAC and those that joined after us who have struggled to find any veteran get-togethers locally. It's fantastic that the Association brings in ladies from across the county to meet many old comrades.

Sandy Warne WRAC 1987-1992, AGC 1992 - 1993

I have been volunteering as the Internal Auditor since 2013, providing an unbiased assessment of the effectiveness of the financial controls of the WRAC Association. I am proud to contribute in this way, supporting the Association and maintaining a bond with the WRAC and female veteran community.

Sarah Morris WRAC 1985-1992, AGC (SPS) / C2 (MSF) 1992 - 2018



I have put the many skills learnt during my service in the WRAC to good use in my career since, and will forever be grateful for those opportunities. Volunteering as a trustee has given me a chance to continue being a part of the WRAC family and increase the voice of female veterans more broadly.

Sue Mackenzie UOTC 1981 - 1985, WRAC 1985 - 92

Chair of the Membership Council

Lt Col (Ret'd) Rowena Naile MBE



In the year of a Grand Reunion, when veterans of the WRAC come together for a triennial celebration of their service, the Association has excelled at furthering the Object of maintaining contact between female veterans and women still serving. From young members of Wales UOTC to senior female officers of the British Army, their attendance at our events further cements our ties to the serving community and demonstrates the impact our proud history has on those who continue to serve and those who are looking towards a career following in the footsteps of the women who went before.



In the year we lost our last ATS 'Bletchley Girl' Betty Webb, she was remembered at our summer event at Bletchley Park where so many ATS codebreakers worked during WWII. Our national, regional and local events continue to attract large numbers of members, and we are proud to welcome members from the serving community and veterans from the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force to our membership and our gatherings. With over 4500 active members we continue to be well represented at veterans events arranged by our friends including The Not Forgotten, The Royal Hospital Chelsea and the Royal British Legion.





The fostering of esprit de corps and comradeship was to the fore in Cardiff where 350 members gathered to reminisce and party the weekend away. The Yorkshire Military Band included many former WRAC Band members making a very special Beating Retreat and Parade. However, the main story of the Grand Reunion had to be 82-year-old Josephine Marchant who attended her first Association event, thinking she would know nobody and meeting someone she had been in training with 60 years before! To me that sums up what the Association is all about.



Being part of the WRAC Association reconnects me with a unique bond that never seems to fade, which focuses on support and legacy, whilst keeping our history alive.

The WRAC Association continues to prove that you can take the women out of the uniform, but you can't take away the camaraderie, the massive friendships, the mutual support and a whole load of laughter.

The WRAC Association is more than shared service, it's lifelong friendships, understanding and support.

Lynda Armstrong

Making memories

Grand Reunion: Cardiff

350 WRAC veterans came together in Cardiff for our triennial reunion - a long weekend of fun and friendship. Old memories were shared and new memories made as our members dined and danced, marched and made merry. Our guests included the Veterans' Commissioner for Wales, Col (Ret'd) James Phillips, whilst the public were treated to a parade of female veterans, and marching band in Queen Alexandra Gardens.



Coming together, getting out and about



I love being in the WRAC Association. It has opened up so many new things to me, including the Grand Reunions. I love going to them and spending a great weekend with lots of ladies with our shared history. I also attend monthly meetings at various locations and always have a wonderful time. I've made so many good friends and acquaintances, I'm so pleased I joined.

Jane Griffin-Ash



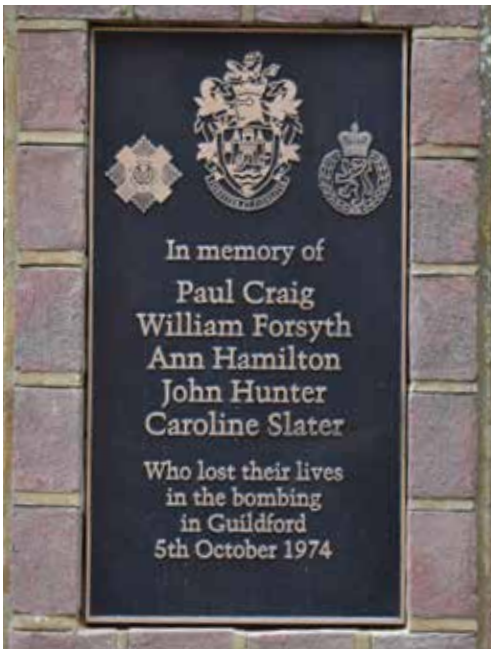
Remembering those who went before

Across the UK and the world, veterans of the WRAC ensure those who went before are never forgotten, whilst inspiring women and girls who are considering a military career. Armed Forces Day in June and November's Remembrance events including the Cenotaph parade allow us to raise the visibility of female veterans, and in a year of significant anniversaries, we also marked eighty years since VE and VJ Days.





Two important anniversaries were marked in Guildford as we celebrated the 60th Anniversary of the opening of Queen Elizabeth Barracks and marked 50 years since the Guildford Pub Bombing which took the lives of two WRAC servicewomen Private Ann Hamilton and Private Caroline Slater. The WRAC Association was proud to install two new plaques which were dedicated that weekend, one honouring those killed, and one to remember the contribution of the WRAC at the site of the old parade square.



Presenting berets and cap badges to female veterans dismissed under the pre 2000 ban on LGBT personnel serving in the British Armed Forces.



*“Thank you for the genuine warm welcome from the WRAC Association. After 57 years of living with the loss and sense of shame I now feel able to hold my head up and be a proud veteran. A day I never dreamt would happen.
Margaret Henderson”*



Connecting with our members

The Lioness

Our members receive two editions of the Lioness magazine each year. The Lioness connects our members, sharing special events, activities and achievements that build on our esprit de corps, even when we are apart.

May I say how beautifully produced and thoroughly interesting the latest edition of Lioness has proved to be. As a former editor of the Guards Magazine, I appreciate just how much energy and imagination have been poured into creating such a brilliant end-product.

**Major General (Ret'd)
P G Williams CMG OBE**



Social media

Our Facebook following has grown to 6.7K followers in the last year and we have started sharing more videos which get high engagement from our members and attract new followers. We use our account to share communications, support new branches, publicise events and celebrate successes and achievements.

The WRAC Association Facebook page is a great way to easily keep in touch with everything that's going on – I never miss an event!
Helen Rutherford



10:11

Veterans receive berets decades after ban kept them from Remembrance events

Xavier Zulueta | 18th August 2025 at 4:50pm



(ing Case Photos) giving a formal welcome from the Army to the veteran veterans affected by the grey bar (Picture: WRAC, The Remembrance Charity)

Twenty veterans of the Women's Royal Army Corps (WRAC) have been formally presented with berets and cap badges at the National Memorial Arboretum – symbols they were once banned from wearing at remembrance events under the Armed Forces' pre-2000 grey bars.

TV, radio and online

ITV News came to Guildford to film our beret presentation ceremony. I couldn't believe it! We watched ourselves on the evening news and relived the moment. I've also been interviewed on BBC radio - it's great to know that people really want to hear what veterans have to say.
Ruth Birch

Chair of the Benevolent Fund Grants Committee

Maj (Ret'd) Monica Jones



This year has continued to reflect a period of steady stewardship and measured demand for support across the WRAC Benevolent Fund with a modest reduction in successful applications of approximately 13%, although the complexity and vulnerability of beneficiaries remain unchanged. The Committee has remained focused on delivering timely, proportionate and compassionate assistance while safeguarding the Fund's long-term sustainability. Financial management remains strong and revised delegated spending powers introduced in July 2025 are now fully embedded, enabling faster decisions without compromising governance.

Partnership working continues to extend the reach of the Fund. Collaboration with the Veterans Charity provides direct support to ATS and WRAC veterans in need of swift support, and 2026 sees the launch of our new partnership with Lightning Reach which will enable us to reach many more eligible veterans including, crucially, those who are currently not part of the wider veteran community. For women who served but have lost touch with the Armed Forces family we hope we can give financial support where needed, and reconnect to offer the wider, holistic support of camaraderie and sisterhood.

We are so grateful
for your donation of funds
towards furniture for us to
start our new life in our
new flat.
We couldn't have done it without
you!

I Would like to thank
Your charity so much, its
beyond so many thank yous
It has made a massive
difference, the stress, pressure
lifted
My sincer thanks and
gratitude.

Our Annual Maintenance Grants allow us to ensure those who are living on low incomes can enjoy a good standard of living through regular weekly payments. We have reviewed these over the last financial year to ensure alignment with eligibility criteria, with new awards made alongside careful management of renewals. These measures reinforce our commitment to targeted, responsible grant-giving. Our care enhancement grants, including nursing-home top-up fees, care at home, and personal expense allowance ensure that our most vulnerable veterans can receive the best care and retain the dignity they so rightly deserve.

Our Committee members and partner organisations support our charity with professionalism and dedication. Together, we continue to uphold the Fund's mission of providing meaningful support to those who have served.

A hand up, not a handout

Support from the WRAC Benevolent Fund makes a real difference to our veterans, enabling women to improve their circumstances and empowering some to get their lives back on track.

Receiving financial support is something many proud veterans prefer to keep private, however some beneficiaries are happy to share their story with others in the hope that they will inspire more struggling veterans to come forward.

Anne lives with the lung condition COPD and her breathing problems affect her mobility. The WRAC Association provided the funds for a mobility scooter and Anne was happy to share the difference it has made to her.



I had been using a wheelchair to go shopping but as my husband is blind in one eye, he does not always see things. We were often knocking into things and saying “sorry”. It got to the stage where I looked for any excuse not to go out.

Having the scooter gave me back my independence and the confidence to go out without spending most of the time apologising. I have quite a lot of hospital appointments, the scooter is so useful as a lot of these appointments are a long way from the car park.

I can't thank you enough as this really has changed my life and given me something to look forward to.

You have gone above and beyond for the continued support. It has made a positive impact on my life and influenced my path forward. I thank you for your generosity and kindness with the continuing annuity payment and providing me with vouchers for clothing - your integrity and empathy is amazing.

CR wanted us to pass on her heartfelt thanks and appreciation for the generous financial support she received from your benevolent fund. You provided the funding for essential roof repairs to her property and plastering and she is so very grateful for your generosity.

From a SSAFA Caseworker

WHAT IS THE FVTP TOOLKIT?

The Female Veterans Transformation Programme (FVTP) Toolkit is a practical resource designed to help organisations, professionals, and services understand and better support the needs of female veterans in the UK. It's based on research, co-production, and co-design with women who have served in the Armed Forces and organisations who support them.



WHY WAS THE FVTP TOOLKIT CREATED?

Although there has been growing recognition of veterans' needs in general, female veterans often report that their experiences, challenges, and strengths are overlooked or misunderstood. Evidence from the FVTP shows clear differences in how women experience transition and their route to the appropriate support when compared with their male colleagues. The toolkit was created to highlight and provide solutions to overcome this gap, ensuring female veterans are visible, recognised and provided with the right support at the right time.

WHO IS THE TOOLKIT FOR?

The toolkit is for anyone working with or supporting veterans, including:

- ✓ Health and social care professionals
- ✓ Charities and service providers (both military specific and general public)
- ✓ Statutory Bodies
- ✓ Employers and educators
- ✓ Policy makers and researchers

Whilst not designed for female veterans themselves, it can be useful for those who are seeking organisations they can reach out to for support.

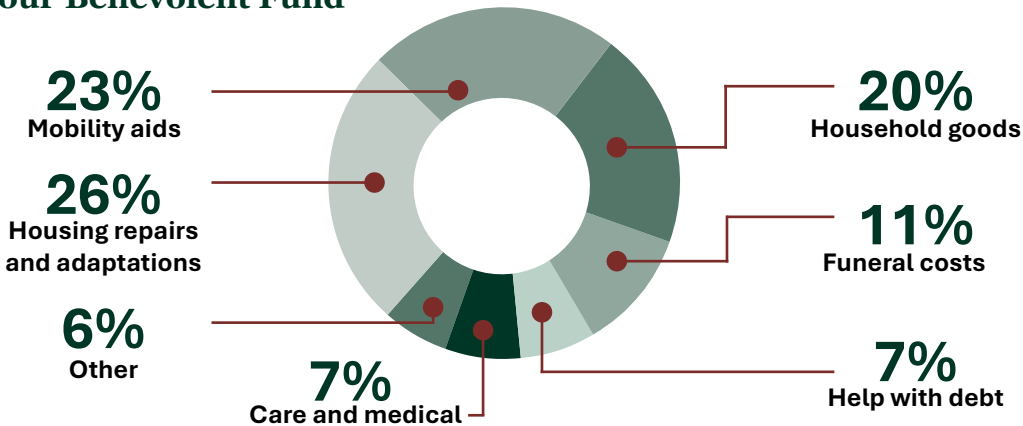


HOW DO I ACCESS THE TOOLKIT?

The Female Veterans Toolkit is available free-of-charge at covenantfund.org.uk/female-veterans-toolkit, and includes downloadable resources, evidence summaries, a self-assessment tool and examples of good practice.

Supporting our female veterans

Requests for assistance most commonly granted by our Benevolent Fund



£200,878
was spent by the
Benevolent Fund

111
successful requests
for assistance were
successful



Reaching & engaging with our members and the veterans community

Proud to work alongside:



Looking to the future

A Message from Vice President Colonel (Ret'd) Amanda Hassell

As I reflect on my journey since taking on the role of Vice President in March 2025, I am both humbled and inspired by the collective energy and commitment shown across our association. My vision is to forge stronger connections and collaboration between staff, trustees, area coordinators, volunteers and branch leads, working 'better together' to support those in need and to provide opportunities for camaraderie amongst all our female veterans. So many of our members and volunteers do such good work at branch level and organising national opportunities for us to get together through events such as the 10k run, Chatsworth cricket, Cyclefest, walking group and the beer festival, to mention a few. There is something for everyone and there are always new ideas being generated at a local level. Camaraderie is so important; we all share our military experience as women and we must continue to be proud of the service we have given, reminding the public that women served too!



Looking to the year ahead we will have further opportunities to present berets and cap badges, and to welcome new members to the Association. I look forward to the development of our new website which, alongside The Lioness magazine, will be our 'front door' to welcoming members and advertising all that is going on in the Association. There will be a few changes to the management board this year and I look forward to working alongside our new Chair of the Membership Council, Janette Deans and new Treasurer, Barbara Johnson, and give heartfelt thanks to the outgoing members Rowena Naile and Tim Savage for their dedication to the Association. As we look forward to increasing our support for those who served in the ATS and WRAC, we will continue our influence campaign to ensure that female veterans of all three services receive the recognition and support they deserve.



Women's Royal Army Corps
wraca.org.uk



Front cover, members of our South Wales branch head to the Remembrance parade at the Cenotaph

Back cover, Association event at the National Memorial Arboretum

wraca.org.uk

Women's Royal Army Corps Association

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