

QARANC ASSOCIATION ANNUAL PRIZE NOMINATION – SCOTTISH BRANCH

NOMINEE: SHEILA A JONES – BRANCH SECRETARY

Sheila has been Secretary of the Scottish Branch since October 2018, a key committee appointment on which the success of the Branch depends. The role requires great attention to detail, excellent communication skills as well as a real affinity with people, qualities which Sheila has in spades.

Sheila is the first point of contact for Branch members; she is always on the front foot, contacting new members, usually within 24 hours, to provide them with all the information they need, as well as seeking their agreement to be put in contact with other members in their local area. As a result many of our members have re-established friendships from previous times and made new ones. She has developed good relationships with HQ staff, maintaining regular, if not frequent contact, updating membership details, ensuring the Branch webpage remains accurate or seeking answers to questions that have been posed to the Branch from other parties.

Whilst Sheila enjoys contact with all our members she does have a great affinity with our more senior ones, checking on them regularly and always offering a seat in her car to any who need or wish it, to ensure they can continue to join in Branch activities, especially those that are a bit further afield. This affords her an excellent opportunity to hear about their experiences both whilst in uniform and since. She is committed to ensuring that this information is not lost and as well as alerting the Oral History team, she has also contacted the Gazette Editor to suggesting articles to highlight their back story to the wider readership. After assuming her role as Secretary Sheila immediately requested that she be responsible for drafting any obituaries, her focus and commitment in producing a fitting tribute to our remarkable members is something of which she can be justifiably proud.

What is little known about Sheila is that she also possesses outstanding detective skills! Not something that immediately springs to mind as a requirement for the role of Secretary! However, last summer we were having difficulty contacting one of our more senior members who lives in rural Perthshire. Sheila contacted other members in her local area to ask if they had heard from her, as well as HQ to check that we did indeed have the correct details. Having exhausted all avenues with no success, Sheila then decided that she would drive north to track her down, which she did by speaking to staff in the cafes and shops she was known to frequent, who in turn contacted neighbours and eventually our lost member, who then made contact with Sheila. There was a simple explanation, but the experience allowed us to establish more reliable communication methods going forward and demonstrates that she is always willing to go the extra mile on behalf of our members.

Sheila demonstrates care, compassion and when appropriate, great good humour in her dealings with our members and HQ. She is calm, efficient and always on the ball in ensuring that all Branch information is accurate and up to date. In short, Sheila goes above and beyond what is expected of a Branch Secretary.