The newly elected Chairman of the War Widows’ Association, Mrs Irene Wills BEM, shows appreciation for the work of the Armed Forces by attending Armed Forces Day events at either end of the country.

Starting on Saturday 21st June 2014 the Chairman, Mrs Irene Wills, BEM, began a very busy week of engagements by attending the Armed Forces Day event in the Isle of White. She then travels the length of the country to be in Stirling on Saturday 28th June 2014 for the main Armed Forces Day National Event; on her way north she will stop off in Liverpool where she will be guest of honour at the War Widows’ Association service of Remembrance held annually in Liverpool Cathedral on Thursday 26th June 2014.

Mrs Wills said “I am immensely privileged to represent the War Widows’ Association in my role as Chairman”. Mrs Wills continued “From personal experience our members know only too well the unique nature of military service and the associated difficulties. The Association is essentially a campaigning organisation but we do understand that anyone suffering a service bereavement often has problems which are very different to those experienced by members of the civilian population. As well as campaigning we can also offer friendship and support through our network of Regional Groups”. Highlighting the current War Widows’ Association campaign Mrs Wills said “I was please to launch the current campaign ‘RETAINING THE WAR PENSION FOR LIFE’ at our AGM in April. We are calling on the government to put right a wrong for a small and declining group of War Widows who are disadvantaged by the change to the War Pension Scheme and the introduction of the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme in 2005; they do not meet the criteria for retaining their pension for life of either scheme. In other words it was THE WRONG TIME TO DIE”.
Notes to Editors:

1. The War Widows’ Association (WWA) was founded in 1971.

2. The achievements of the War Widows’ Association to date can be accessed at www.warwidows.org.uk.

3. Clarification on the current campaign -
   a. If your spouse died or left Military or War Service before 31 March 1973 and you also receive the War Pension Scheme Supplementary Pension you keep your War Widows’ Pension for life.
   b. If you were widowed after 5 April 2005 and receive Survivors Guaranteed Income Payment from the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme you keep your War Widows Pension for life.
   c. However, if your spouse died or left Military or War Service after 6 April 1973 and before 5 April 2005, at present you do stand to lose your War Widows Pension if you remarry or cohabit.
   d. The War Widows’ Association believes this to be unfair and outdated. It would only cost £70,000 a year to right this wrong (Lord Astor in Hansard on 21 January 2014)

4. His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales is Patron of the War Widows’ Association and the President is Baroness Fookes DBE DL.

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