

<b>Surname:</b> Barber	<b>First Name(s):</b> Norah	<b>Army Number:</b> W/290286	
<b>Maiden name (if applicable):</b> Coyle	<b>Name used during service:</b> Coyle	<b>Rank:</b> Cpl	
<b>Main base:</b> Richmond London Rome Vienna	<b>Training base:</b> Dalkeith, Nr Edinburgh	<b>Enrolled at:</b> Dalkeith	
<b>Platoon/Section:</b>	<b>Company/Battery:</b> No 1 I.T.C. & A.C.A.	<b>Group/Regiment:</b> A.T.S.	<b>Command:</b>
<b>Year(s) of service:</b> 7/1/1944 to 16/12/1946	<b>Reason for discharge:</b> End of Service, Class A Release	<b>Trade:</b> Clerk / Shorthand Typist	
<b>Uniform Issued:</b>  S.D. Shirts Tie Shoes Stockings Shoulder bag Side cap Pants Tropical kit  (we were allowed to wear nylons in Europe!)	<b>Photo:</b>    In Rome		
<b>Description of daily tasks:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Clerical Duties.</li> <li>• I never did any P.T. or fatigues, I took my turn at being Orderly Pte and later when I was a Cpl I was Orderly Sgt. This meant I had to make sure everyone was in at night, in the early morning I had to waken the Cooks who were on duty that day.</li> </ul>		

Pay book:

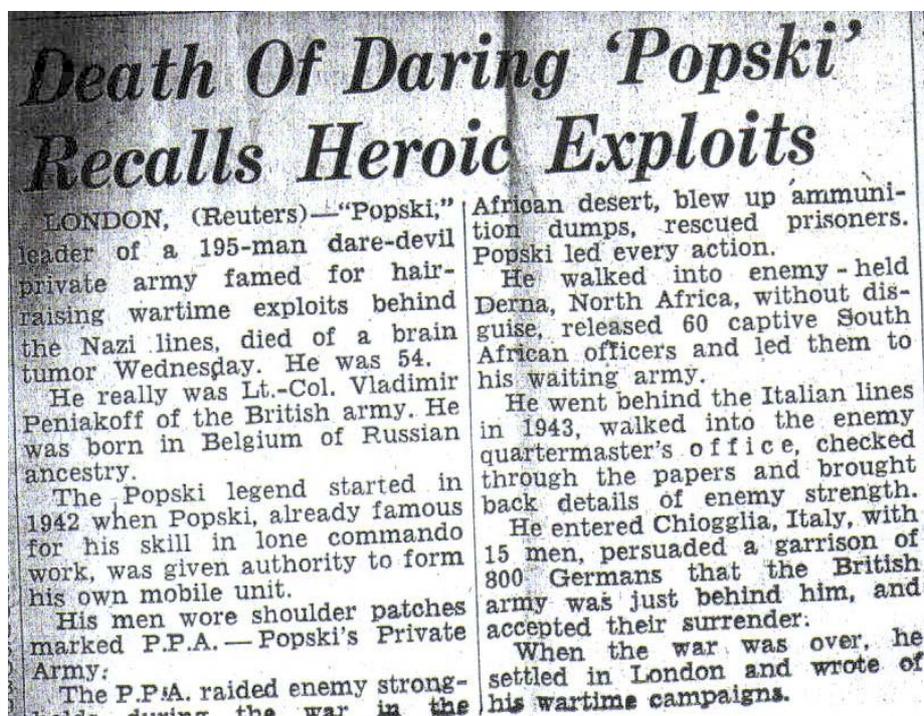
2	3
(1) SOLDIER'S NAME and DESCRIPTION on ATTESTATION.	DESCRIPTION ON ENLISTMENT.
Army Number <u>290286</u>	Height <u>5</u> ft <u>5</u> ins. Weight <u>143</u> lbs.
Surname (in capitals) <u>COYLE</u>	Maximum Chest <u>35</u> ins. Complexion <u>Fair</u>
Christian Names (in full) <u>HONORA</u>	Eyes <u>Green</u> Hair <u>Dark Brown</u>
Date of Birth <u>9 March</u>	Distinctive Marks and Minor Defects
Place of Birth { Parish _____ In or near the town of _____ In the county of _____	
Trade on Enlistment <u>Railway Clerk</u>	
Nationality of Father at birth _____	
Nationality of Mother at birth _____	
Religious Denomination <u>R.C.</u>	
Approved Society _____	
Membership No. _____	
Enlisted at <u>Jarrow</u> On <u>7 Jan 44</u>	
For the :- * Regular Army. * Supplementary Reserve. * Territorial Army. * Army Reserve Section D. * Strike out those inapplicable.	
For _____ years with the Colours and _____ years in the Reserve.	
Signature of Soldier <u>Honora Coyle</u>	
Date <u>7 January 1944</u>	
	CONDITION ON TRANSFER TO RESERVE.
	Found fit for _____
	Defects or History of past illness which should be enquired into if called up for Service.
	<u>A.T.S. Group. 55/c</u> <u>C. Chamberlain 7th</u>
	<u>AF. 3149</u>
	Date <u>24-11-44</u> 19 <u>44</u>
	Initials of M.O. i/c. _____

Memorable moments:

- At the beginning of the War I was in a reserved occupation, working for the Railway (very exciting?). I was called up on the 7<sup>th</sup> January 1944 and reported for training to Dalkeith, Nr Edinburgh. My mother had given me a small bottle of brandy, in case I got sick, - this was mother's "cure all". That first night, our Sgt came to tell us all the Rules and Regulations, one being that "No alcohol was allowed in the barracks". So I went to the 'Ladies' with my little bottle and drank it all - I couldn't waste it - I slept well that night. After my initial training I went to Camberley for Driver Training, I passed all the technical tests with no trouble and the driving was fine until I had my Test. When I had to stop to let a convoy of tanks pass, and I was on quite a steep hill. Then with all the "Double-de-clutching" etc I must have panicked and that was what failed me - at least that was what I understood when I was R.T.U.'d (Returned to Unit). But it was for the best.
- As I was a shorthand typist I was put into administration and was posted to No 1 T.C., with the 'Green Howards' in Richmond in Yorkshire. I enjoyed that but later I volunteered to go overseas, hoping that I would go to France. Instead I was posted to London to join The Allied Commission for Austria which was located in St Paul's School.
- Eventually, we all went to Liverpool and boarded the troopship Alcantara, this was a very pleasant journey but when we were going through the Bay of Biscay we were chased by a U Boat and our escort dropped depth charges. Strangely none of us took much notice except for the awful noise they made. We must have gotten used to the bombing in Britain.
- After that we sailed through the Straights of Gibraltar into the Mediterranean, stopping one night in Algiers - but couldn't go ashore. That would have been very interesting. However, we sailed on to Naples from where we went by road to Rome, this was wonderful with all the history and architecture. There was so much to see and was also a lot of fun for the few A.T.S. with all the Allied Forces that were stationed there. Shortly after our arrival the war ended so that made everything better. While we were there those of us who were Catholic - and anyone else who would like to go were invited to meet the Pope. There were only a few of us, so we had an almost Private Audience with the Pope, this was a really great honour. Then in September we all flew up to Vienna where our offices were

located in Schonbrunn Palace, this is a beautiful Palace and what a wonderful place to work. The A.T.S. billets were up on the hill behind the Palace, past the Glorietta. We walked to and from work every day although some of the others took the transport, but it was such a lovely walk. Our billets had been the married quarters for the S.S. troops, so they were very comfortable.

- While we were in Vienna we had Leave and went to Cortina and Venice, once or twice we had little Laves when we could hitch rides to different parts of Austria, or back into Italy.
- Vienna was divided into four sections, occupied by the British, Americans, French and Russians – which made it all very interesting, we met quite a few of each of the nationalities. The Allied Commission was involved with the Displaced Persons and the Prisoners of War as well as Food Rationing etc and returning Austria back to normal. At first I was in the Typing Pool in the Admin Branch then later I went to work for Major Larkman in Officers Release. Among the many Officers whose Release I processed was Colonel Peniakoff of Popski's Private Army. That was a great experience. See cutting below:



- Also whilst there, I stood very close to Gen Mark Clarke at one parade we had at Schonbrunn but I didn't meet him, later in London I did personally meet and shook hands with Gen Doolittle at a party we had.
- Eventually, I was released as Class 'A' Release on 16<sup>th</sup> December 1946 in Aldershot Military Dispersal Centre and went back home for a while. Then I went to London to work and there met my husband to be, only to discover that he had been on the Alcantara when we were on it, he was returning from leave and had been in Rome when we were, and also in Austria – but we did not meet until we got on the same bus to go home for Christmas. We were married that July.

Photos:



At my desk



Skiing in Cortina? We didn't 'bend our knees'  
Sheila, Nicky and me



Outside Schonbrunn,  
Me, Florrie and 'D'



Admin Branch 'lower echelon' outside Schonbrunn



'A' Platoon, No 1 Company A.T.S. – Rome 1945

Norah Barber