


Surname: Davidson	First Name(s): Esme Ivy	Army Number: W/165557	
Maiden name (if applicable): Stephens	Name used during service: Stephens / Davidson	Rank: Pte	
Main base: Edinburgh Glasgow Gourock Bristol E Yorkshire	Training base: Denbury, Nr Newton Abbot Oswestry	Enrolled at: Bristol	
Platoon/Section: 'A' Section	Company/Battery: 444/449/451/472 Batteries	Group/Regiment: 133 (M) H.A.A. Royal Artillery	Command: AA Command
Year(s) of service: 2/4/1942 to 15/8/1945	Reason for discharge: War over Married 31/03/1945	Trade: Telephonist	
Uniform Issued: Battle Dress S.D. Shirts and collars Pyjamas Underwear Socks Boots Stockings Overcoat Hat Gaiters	Photo:  <p style="text-align: center;">1943</p>		
Description of daily tasks:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We did various shifts day and night, when not on duty we were on standby. • Duties: 8-10 / 11-1 (2 of us) then on nights 10-8 / 1-4 / 4-7 / 7-10. • Did Office relief and general fatigues, toilets etc. 		
Pay book:	Not presently available		

Memorable moments:

- I volunteered for the A.T.S. in March 1942 and went to Denbury near Newton Abbot on 2 April 1942. We had immunisations for TB etc and were given numbers and kitted out. We did a month's training, with plenty of square bashing and discipline. It was a very different life for me as I was an only child and went into a barrack room of 20 girls!
- Posted to Oswestry to learn predictor, which I didn't like and we all were moved to Blackdown, where they were selecting telephonists. We took a short written exam and oral one, and I had 4 weeks learning switchboard and telephone before I was posted to Edinburgh 444 Bty. We had fixed shifts day and night, we didn't do fatigues as our duties were often overlapping and we were on stand-by. We usually did the morning parade. There were 8 telephonists in our Bty. We only had communication with other Btys if we had been in action, to report what ammunition had been used.
- We were in the Command Post if it was our duty turn or we were on stand-by. At Blackdown we had large brick blocks with 4 large rooms, each room held 20 girls, but mostly we were in Nissen huts, 12 to a hut. We slept one with head to the wall and one to centre of room. We had a large black stove, with a pipe going through the roof, and we had some lovely fires! All this applies to the various camps I was in, 444 Bty Edinburgh, 449 Bty Glasgow and Gourrock.
- Someone in a Bty in Bristol needed a compassionate posting as her parents were ill, so I got the exchange to Burwalls RHQ by the suspension bridge.
- I spent most of my service in 451 Battery, around Bristol at Burwalls which was 133 RHQ. I preferred to be operational and joined 457 Bty after 4 months at Cribbs Causeway, then to Rodway Common. At Cribbs we were given an hour's marching drill with hands in pockets by the Sgt Major; that cured us of walking round with our hands in our pockets. Did a month's relief at Weston-super-Mare, in action there and then to Whitchurch for a long time. At Whitchurch we had Saturday night dances till midnight. The NAAFI was shut up and opened at 9 am Sunday for a Church Service by the Vicar of the local Church. It was awful with the smell of beer and smoke from the previous evening!!
- On one occasion, whilst at Whitchurch, we were told to plot a plane from Lands End till it landed at Whitchurch Airport as there was a V.I.P. on board. It turned out to be Churchill returning from the U.S.A. after a meeting with Roosevelt!
- Up to Beverley Hedon – November 1944 on a dummy site, with dreadful conditions, no proper or flush loo's, men used to clean up daily, emptying buckets over hedges. I can't remember about food, but our C.O. was de-ranked over the move. Our beds were mattresses divided into 3 biscuits which drifted apart at night! Sgt Major used to run a stick round our Nissen hut at 7 am to wake us up.
- Christmas 1944 we were stationed at Withernsea in East Yorkshire in requisitioned houses, taken to gunsite 48 hours on duty, 25 hrs off. We were snowed in at the site as water was brought up in a tanker and food was in brought a truck, we thought it good to get a bucket of snow to melt down. There was about 2" and all of us in the barrack room washed in it!! A cup of soup at night when on duty, was followed by a cup of tea in the morning, in the same cup, as we were using head and breast sets and were unable to wash our cups. We were taken to our gunsite by truck. It was about 5 miles away on a cliff top and we had Russian PoWs there. They fought the Germans and were taken prisoner, then made to fight us. They made us roads there and move any heavy things about, on the beach below a German plane had been brought down so we had plenty of souvenir hunting!
- I was on duty and took the call when V.E.Day was announced, also I was on night duty when the doodle-bugs came over London for the first time, they were called DIVER DIVER.
- I got married and went to 472 Bty at Spurn Head and down to Rotherham and on

to Taunton for demob in Group 1.

Photos:



Anglesey – Esme Davidson 3rd from the right



Tycroes 1943 – Esme Davidson far right, first row