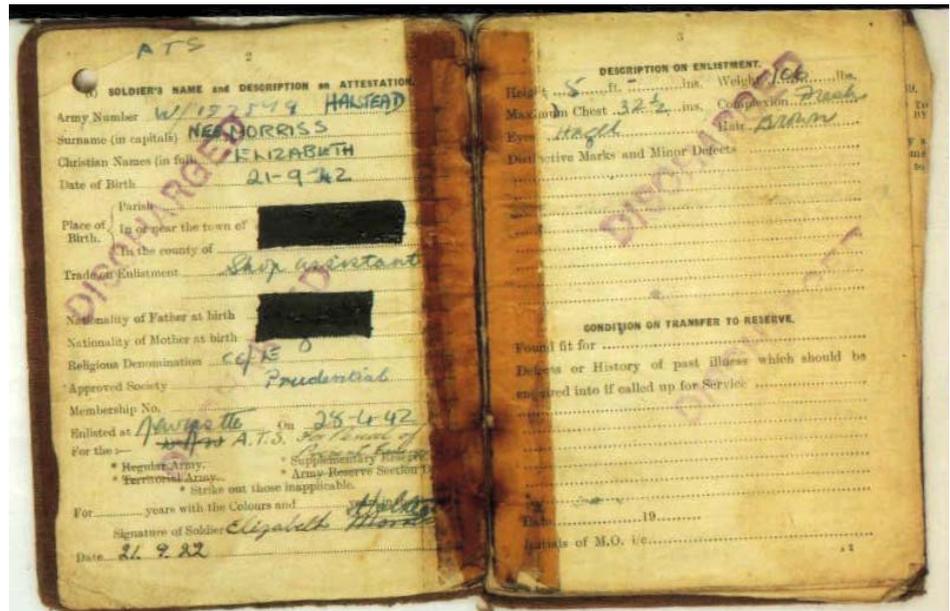


<b>Surname:</b> Halstead	<b>First Name(s):</b> Elizabeth	<b>Army Number:</b> W/153579	
<b>Maiden name (if applicable):</b> Morris	<b>Name used during service:</b> Morris / Halstead	<b>Rank:</b> L/Cpl	
<b>Main base:</b> Various (see list*)	<b>Training base:</b> Oswestry	<b>Enrolled at:</b> Newcastle-on-Tyne	
<b>Platoon/Section:</b>	<b>Company/Battery:</b> 568 H.A.A. (M) Battery	<b>Group/Regiment:</b> Royal Artillery	<b>Command:</b> A.A. Command
<b>Year(s) of service:</b> 28/04/1942 to 21/02/1945	<b>Reason for discharge:</b> Family reasons	<b>Trade:</b> Predictor Operator (No 1)	
<b>Uniform Issued:</b>  Shirts Tie Cap Shoes Trousers Jerkin Sheepskin jacket	<b>Photo:</b> 		
<b>Description of daily tasks:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On a gunsite each day.</li> <li>• Duty on Command Post.</li> <li>• Every 24 hours – guard duties, kitchen duties.</li> </ul>		

Pay book:



Memorable moments:

- It was obvious I would join the A.T.S., my father was a C.S.M. (MM) attached to the Black Watch. My brother was serving in India in the K.O.S.B. I did infantry training at the Fenham Barracks and was asked to stay on to train other rookies, but I declined. I wanted to go into H.A.A.
- I think it was at Oswestry where we were sorted out into different jobs. I was given the Number One on the Predictor. Two other girls looked through telescopes following the target. As the Predictor moved that gave us the angle, bearing, height and distance. I had to call out the fuse to the Sergeant on the Command Post, but first of all I had to examine the batteries on the Command Post.
- I was sent to Hyde Park for one day to operate a new American Predictor. There the Officer in charge was Mary Churchill – a very pleasant Officer. We were both being taught this new instrument.
- We were unfortunate to be bombed out three times. The first was at Dollis Hill London. I was very lucky there, instead of being on top of the Command Post, I was down in the plotting room when the bomb dropped. Two of the girls were wounded. Sadly my friend was hit by shrapnel and lost her eye. The following morning we all had to help clear away the used shells etc. The second time was in Walthamstow, just before D Day. I think we must have had one of the first “doodle bugs” as we called them. Most of us were already in the Command Post but the huts were very badly hit. The guard room had a direct hit. None of the guards survived which, of course, meant we had to move again. All in all I think I moved camp at least onto twenty-two different sites.
- While we were on training in Whitby, Yorkshire, the gunsite was on the cliffs at the top of the steps. As we were billeted in Hotels in the town, we climbed these steps at least twice a day. We also did guard duty but only till six o'clock. One very wet and cold night in Bishopton, Scotland the sentry told me a very official car arrived at the gate. I went outside to see for myself, and asked the Officer to come inside and sign the book. He didn't wish to get out of the car but I insisted. After he signed the book I phoned the Officer's Mess and Mr Moore came to collect him. I couldn't have let him walk around the camp on his own. I will always remember his name, Sir John Ruggles Brown or should I say “General”. I was congratulated on parade the following morning for “good security”.

- We also did kitchen duty the usual 'spud bashing', the washing up, cleaning the cooking pots. Some of them were very big and heavy.
  - On our days off we were a happy lot, saw most of London, went to quite a few shows. The underground was always packed with people – sometimes it was difficult to walk past people trying to lay down for the night.
  - Our guns were 3.7 or 4.5 and after one incident we helped the gunners to remove the spent shells – they were very heavy.
  - When in Scotland we were non-operational, and we used to help the farmers collect the potato harvest. One farmer had a peg leg and he would follow us along the line to move the soil to see if we had missed any. One morning, a very misty one, we were dancing on the flat cart when we dropped the farmer's crutch over the side. We were all too busy laughing – we couldn't tell the driver to stop, so Ethel jumped off and ran back to find it. Of course, by the time we stopped we couldn't see her through the mist. I still remember her now, running through the mist waving his crutch. Were we relieved to see her. Yes we did have some good times and a lot of laughs.
  - While stationed near Birmingham, a few of us went to Church and we were confirmed by the Archbishop of Birmingham in a Church in Yardley. I still have the book "The Hill of Lord".
  - In some of our camps we had beds at the Command Post but most of them were situated away from our Nissen Huts or 'Spiders', so of course, when the alarms went we had to run or 'leg it' across the fields in the dark – always hoping we were running the right way.
  - Our third upset was when I was in Ilford and the town was hit by a V2. At that time I was not on duty, and of course, we knew nothing until it dropped. My husband was on his way to see me, and he was caught in the blast in Ilford, picked up and carted off to hospital.
  - On one occasion we were following the sleeve, we realised we had hit it. Very pleased with ourselves we were, but our Officer soon put us right. The pilot of the plane had phoned to say he was going back to base. "Tell that lot down there I am pulling this thing, not pushing it!" We had cut the wire! I remember Michael Bentine telling the same story on television.
  - The Salvation Army was very good to us. The van would call to our site. We could buy sweets, cigs, wool, handcrafts – they were always welcome.
- \* Various camps and gunsites: Fenham Barracks, Newcastle; Oswestry; Bishopton – Gourrock, Scotland; Edington; Mitcham; Romford; Bexley Heath; Whetstone; Ilford; Chadwell Heath; Hoo; Walton-on-the-Naze; Stemington, Fort Borstal, Kent; Ramsgate, Kent.

**Photos:**



Pte Halstead second left, back row



Pte Halstead, front row, far right  
Training Course at Stemington



Pte Halstead first left, front row



Sports day