

Surname: Hard	First Name(s): Jane	Army Number: W/	
Maiden name (if applicable): Stanley	Name used during service: Stanley	Rank: Private L/Cpl Subaltern	
Main base:	Training base: Basic Oswestry – GL course	Enrolled at: Volunteered – Denbury Barracks Devon	
Platoon/Section: H44	Company/Battery: 236 Training Regiment Battery HQ Hayes, Middx (M12 Gunsite) 461 Battery, Newhaven 583 Battery, Seaford	Group/Regiment: Royal Artillery	Command: Heavy (Mixed) Ack Ack
Year(s) of service: 12/6/1942 to 13/4/1945	Reason for discharge: Demob – end of war	Trade: Operator Fire Control (OFC) Radar Plotting Officer (Subaltern)	
Uniform Issued: S.D. Steel helmet Leather jerkin	Photo: 		
Description of daily tasks:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I worked in a radar cabin with two other girls. I had a range operator on one side up on the right and next to her was the girl who moved the cabin. We were all very close together • I gave the info through to the men on the guns – I was the Lance Corporal with earphones on, co-ordinating the information. 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range operator had to match up the range bearing on her instruments. • The girl who had the most difficult job out of the three of us in the cabin, was the girl who moved the cabin. The girl operating this, in order to get on to range, had to manually move the cabin. She had two handles which she turned, which made the cabin swing around. It would be like trying to turn your TV set around to get the aerial to receive the TV Signal, but she was turning the cabin to get the info coming in from the aeroplanes. It was really hard work to get on to the signal as the whole cabin had to move; it had to follow round to reach the signal. • The range operator would match up the range bearing and then I would pass details through my mouthpiece to the command post where the men were waiting for the info. We sent the range, bearing, 'on target' and the Captain in charge of the gunners on the gunsite would then put the guns according to the range and the bearing we had signalled. There was a tiny TV screen in our cabin that I was in charge of as Lance Corporal, with a little line like a heart machine and there was a thing called IFF (identification friend or foe). If there was an allied aircraft flying as opposed to an enemy one, a little signal would come and then you knew which one you should be firing at. No friendly fire from us! Hopefully then the men would shoot something down. I had nothing to do with firing. • Another girl in the team worked the power unit, which was comparatively easy to do; this unit gave the power to the small cabin. • We were on 24 hour duty and when the alarm bells rang you would rush around and take post. • After I was commissioned the routine was 24 hours admin, 24 hours operational. You had to be on 24 hour call – the alarm bells would go – you couldn't obviously have a normal 24 hours. You had a reasonably normal one if you were on admin, because you had ordinary days, supervising the meals and that sort of thing. Doing telephone calls, writing out passes, all the admin side. Obviously, if you were on 24 hours operational you were on call for 24 hours, period. You could sleep when you could sleep. You didn't think about it because the adrenalin kept you going. Then about every 8 days normally, you had 24 hours leave.
Pay book:	Not available
Memorable moments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When I left school I went as a young red cross nurse. I thought I wanted to nurse wounded soldiers – sounded very glam! I was put in an orthopaedic hospital and then I drifted into radiography, but I couldn't manage that as I wasn't any good at the simplest form of maths. You had to do war work at 21 and so then I went into the ATS. • In June 1942, I had 6 weeks at Oswestry Training Regiment, which was very hard work. Six weeks of number 1 GL course. GL was the basic training in electricity circuits and that sort of thing. I couldn't believe I could get through, not me. I remember being issued with my uniform at basic training. All of us girls were issued with our pink 'stays' which we had to tuck under our arm, and then march across the camp back to our quarters – much to the amusement of the male 'regulars' at the camp. • Following this, in November, there was another 6 weeks in a huge barrack; number 1 course learning to be an operator fire control and then I had 2 weeks of practical, manning with my team. Then I had a month's leave and was posted to my first gunsite BHQ Hayes M12. The Battery had two HQ gunsites, a main site and an auxiliary site. We were on duty ... on call a lot there. • Once we got on to our gunsites we were in Nissen huts and the worst job was being responsible for keeping the fire going.

- I don't mean any disrespect, but the men that commanded the mixed heavy ack ack batteries, were obviously unsuited in some way or another, perhaps due to physical limitations, to join the troops abroad, I remember our first commander was a terribly shy man, he almost blushed if you asked him something, he wasn't used to having women around. He got nicely teased!
- At new year I wrote in my diary ... "The New Year, the whole country is praying on all lips and in our hearts, we hope that peace is going to come soon." ... but of course the war had only just begun ... "It is the greatest wish of everybody. Looking back on the last year with all its events, only one course seems possible, duty 'til the general freedom of the country is obtained by the sacrifice of our personal freedom. Duty, however unpleasant is a source of joy". Sounds funny to read it now – not quite real.
- In May 1943, I offered myself, wrongly I think as I was much happier as a L/Cpl, I didn't like the admin ... I offered myself to the War Office selection board in Leeds to go through a very rigorous process in order to be commissioned. In June, a year after I had joined, I went to pre-OCTU and was accepted in Guildford where we slept in tents. I remember we were trained by very fierce male sergeants who did drill. They shouted a lot but one just took that for granted. We were all in the same boat and there was a wonderful esprit de corps.
- After pre-OCTU, on July 8th I went to Officer's Training School, 2 months, at Windsor. Then after 48 hours leave, I was commissioned on August 23rd as a Subaltern.
- September 10 1943 I was posted to what they called H44 (that's the name of the battery) in Newhaven. 461 Battery, my first battery, that was where I was newly commissioned, a young subaltern.
- Once I was commissioned I left my little cabin of 3 with one at the power unit, and went up to the Command Post where the men were, with the Major. A Major was in charge of the whole battery with a Junior Commander in charge of the girls. The Command Post wasn't underground but was sort of in a dip but you were undercover. The men were outside obviously with 4 guns, 4.8 guns, but the Command Post was in the charge of the Plotting Officer and after my commission I became the Plotting Officer. There was a large screen about 10' by 12' and when the information came through from the radar, from the operators fire control, we would plot it on the map, which was lit up underneath.
- I found the life after I was commissioned to be quite mentally lonely. There were two male officers and one girl or three male officers and two girl officers, but luckily one was always on the job, especially women officers.
- When I was at Newhaven someone came down and did ask me whether I wanted to do something with my French and I said no. I didn't know what it was but I presume it was to go into the SOE Special Operations Executive.
- Then the battery was posted to firing camp in the Isle of Anglesey, Tycroes, very very bleak. There were aeroplanes at practice camp flying up and down with a drone. It was November and we had ear muffs, I remember.
- January 1944 we did not see a single hostile plane, "The constant vigil is more trying than action", I write in my diary, "but as it is not possible to route Jerry out, we must wait strong ready and patient". "I used to have 24 hours off which I have to miss as I am on the entrancing job of supervising the cookhouse."
- Came back from firing camp and I was posted to, 1944, posted to my second battery in Seaford. That was on the golf course, and we had to take post when the alarm bells went, up the side of the hills. You were up there before you suddenly realised. That was 583 battery, on the Sussex Downs not far from Newhaven. We were up at 8 o'clock, 12 o'clock and 4 o'clock, 6 o'clock, and fire 237 pls rounds. "Marvellous" I say in my diary. Although I don't know how many have been shot down.

- We did know when we had shot something down but we didn't have statistics. Sometimes you didn't know for sure because the debris would fall somewhere else.
- The second time I moved to firing camp with the second battery again to Tycroes, Anglesey, February 1944. I say "We marched to Newhaven to get on a special troop train at 7.30 in the morning but are lucky to get a couple of carriages to ourselves."
- Then we were moved to Brighton around the time of VE day in 1945. I don't know quite when the battery was moved from operational duties, because the war was coming to an end. The battery was moved to requisitioned houses on the sea front. But it was a weird life as no-one was allowed into the town, it was still all fortified, barbed wire on the beaches and everything. I used to take my girls route marching along the front - we were just waiting to be demobbed, but it was still a fortified town. No-one could come and go. Well we could go out if we were posted out.
- I remember seeing the V1s and V2s coming over. The V1 was like a little mini torpedo and you could hear them coming. There was a flame at the back. This was a last sort of fling by the Nazis before the end of the war. You couldn't really attack them, they came too low for radar and predictors and they were there on top of you, just on top of the houses. Then it was like a little motor bike and then, of course, you knew if the flame went out it would crash. They were pretty harmless but rather frightening.
- The V2s went over London mainly. You didn't know, you didn't hear them ... they just crashed.
- VE Day I wrote in my diary, "Prime Minister gives short announcement at 3.00 o'clock in the afternoon and the King speaks at 9.00 o'clock. It is quite unreal especially as life will continue much the same for a long time, apart from the blackout. Even when we all go to church at Newton Ferrers and have a drink at the Dolphin and then go down to the cottage to celebrate with our friends, you find it hard to realise that the war is over at long last, it has been so long. The end of the hostilities VE day, 12.00 – 2.00 all the ships in the harbour – hooters sound their sirens and one awakes to a world, not at peace exactly but with peace to begin. I hope we are united in peace and in the new world and as united as in war, as we shall lose the hard fought peace."
- I was really in a hurry to get out after the war. I was free to leave the army on Friday 13 April 1945 to start my nursing training. Before, for the last few months we were on Datchet Common in freezing weather, everything froze up. We had to queue up to have our baths in people's houses. I was demobbed from Datchet Common as I wanted to leave early to start my nursing training.

Photos:







My friend Peggy Roper