

<b>Surname:</b> Hawker	<b>First Name(s):</b> Jean	<b>Army Number:</b> W/	
<b>Maiden name (if applicable):</b>	<b>Name used during service:</b> Hawker	<b>Rank:</b> Pte	
<b>Main base:</b> Leamington Spa Kineton	<b>Training base:</b> Lancaster Worcester	<b>Enrolled at:</b> Manchester	
<b>Platoon/Section:</b>	<b>Company/Battery:</b>	<b>Group/Regiment:</b> A.T.S.	<b>Command:</b> Southern Command
<b>Year(s) of service:</b> 17/4/1942 to 1946	<b>Reason for discharge:</b> De-mob	<b>Trade:</b> Clerk	
<b>Uniform Issued:</b> Service Dress	<b>Photo:</b> 		
<b>Description of daily tasks:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No detail</li> </ul>		
<b>Pay book:</b>	Not available.		

**Memorable moments:**

- After joining the ATS we left Manchester on Friday 17 April 1942. It was around 10.30 am and we left by train from the London Road Station (now named Piccadilly Station). There was quite a party of us and there seemed to be a lot of confusion as to where we were going, lots of stops and rushing to the RTD (Railway Transport Officer) until we got to Lancaster. We then had to march to a hall to be medically examined. After that off to the Barracks to be kitted out. Then to an old building which used to be an asylum. The grounds were vast and lovely (don't forget I came from Manchester town). We were very lucky because it was a sunny dry spring. By this time it was eight o'clock and we had not eaten all day. I was appalled when they brought buckets of cool cocoa with lumps of bread and cheese for us to eat, I must say there were not many takers. We had to sleep in bunk beds and there were too many of us for the facilities that had been laid on. We had to queue every morning to use the toilet and have a wash. One morning I heard an officer say "there are too many bodies here".
- On the Saturday we had TAB in the right arm and another vaccination in the left arm. These made some of the girls very poorly. We were confined to barracks until Monday and then we were able to go out, but only if you had full uniform. Some of us needed alterations to parts of our uniform and so we had to stay in barracks until they were finished.
- I made friends with a very nice person who was called Robbie who came from Liverpool. We used to go out to the swimming baths for our 'baths' once a week. We liked all the folk in Lancaster and we also enjoyed bus rides to Morecombe, the fare was 6d and at the Milk Bar it was 4d for a Milk shake. The Service Clubs were really good and one even had an electric iron that we could use.
- Our CSM was a Mrs Frost, a Dunkirk Veteran. She was very strict and regimental but also humane and fair. She put us through our paces and turned us into good marchers. When we had our first parade on St George's Day she took us to the barracks – we couldn't have a band so she just played on a drum for us. We had all the usual "Rookie" training, not too rough, although I didn't relish the gas experience without gas masks on.
- After 6 weeks Robbie and I were sent to Worcester on a clerical course. We were lucky enough to be placed in private billets with a Mrs Jones who was a lovely old lady. She was also a good cook and kept everything spotlessly clean. She really spoilt us and even wanted to do our washing and ironing.
- To put icing on the cake she provided us with a bath, in a tin bath in front of a fire, each week – bear in mind she had to boil all the water. Also remember, in those years water had to be used very sparingly, quite a luxury, regular bathing!
- The course lasted 4 weeks at a college where we were the only female students. We had a male sergeant for details who was 'military wise' and lady teachers for English, Mathematics and touch-typing. We used to sit by the River Severn when lessons were over and do some studying. Yes, it was very pleasant as were the people. I think the place was called Barbourne, they had nice shops and a beautiful church. They also had small Dance Hall where we had to queue to get in. After the course had ended we had our first 14 days leave and were given particulars of our 'postings'.
- After having a good time at home, including celebrating my 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, I travelled to Warwickshire, Robbie joined me en-route at Preston. When we arrived at Warwick station, there were no officials to tell us how to get to our headquarters. By a stroke of luck, two soldiers arrived who knew where we need to go. They carried our kit bags and took us to a large Hostel. We assumed they had been sent to help us but that was not so, it was purely their kind-heartedness to ladies in distress. We did see them the next day and thanked them. We were picked up the next day and taken to Leamington Spa where our headquarters were situated.

- It was then decide that Robbie and I should go to Marlborough Farm Camp in Kineton C.R.E., it was still being built. Previously it had been a 480 acre farm and eventually it became a Central Ammunition Dept. The Munitions Factories were camouflaged as hills and it had it's own railway. We were taken by the Adjutant's Batman to the camp, where we had a snack and then we were taken to Northend Village. Once again we were lucky enough to have private billets, but we were not quite as well looked after. We had to eat in the NAAFI and do our washing there. The camp was 2 miles away across the field or 3 miles by road. It was lovely country and we were able to go for walks during our lunch break and of course during the evening. There were also a few country pubs where we had various celebrations. Our office was in a cottage with steps outside and there was a Nissen Hut for the stores-office and another for the draughtsmen.
- There were over 3,000 men and most of them did not know that we women were there. As the camp grew more ATS arrived, first were the Signal Corps for the switchboard and two shorthand typists for our office. These were Dorothy Walker and Dawn. Just after they came we moved into the camp and into the hut that was to be used for the officers. It was great because we had our own cook and orderly, waited on hand and foot an there were no Officers or NCOs. Our pay was brought to us from Leamington Spa. After 3 months we were moved to what was to be the NCOs hut, we then had to eat in the main mess. Our last move was to our own lines, Cracker Nissen huts, 20 people at each end with the ablutions in the centre. By this time we had Officers and NCOs in charge of us and an ATS office. We also had our own cook house though the food was never very good. I spent 4 years at this camp and mostly with the same girls in the Nissen huts. We had lots of good clean fun and got on very well together. Of course we all had our share of bad times, specially when someone close in the other services was reported missing, injured or killed. Robbie's only brother (whose wife was expecting their first baby) was killed in France. I don't know how things went on for them as Robbie was posted to Chester, being nearer to Liverpool, and we lost touch.
- On reflection I realise how fortunate I was to have enjoyed the company and friendship of so many good people, whom I really missed for a few months after my de-mob.

**Photos:**



*Taffy, Joan, Jean, Dot, Jenny and Joan at Marlborough Farm Camp in Kineton C.R.E.*

Text provided by Miss Jean Hawker but deposited posthumously by Mrs Jenny Stimpson