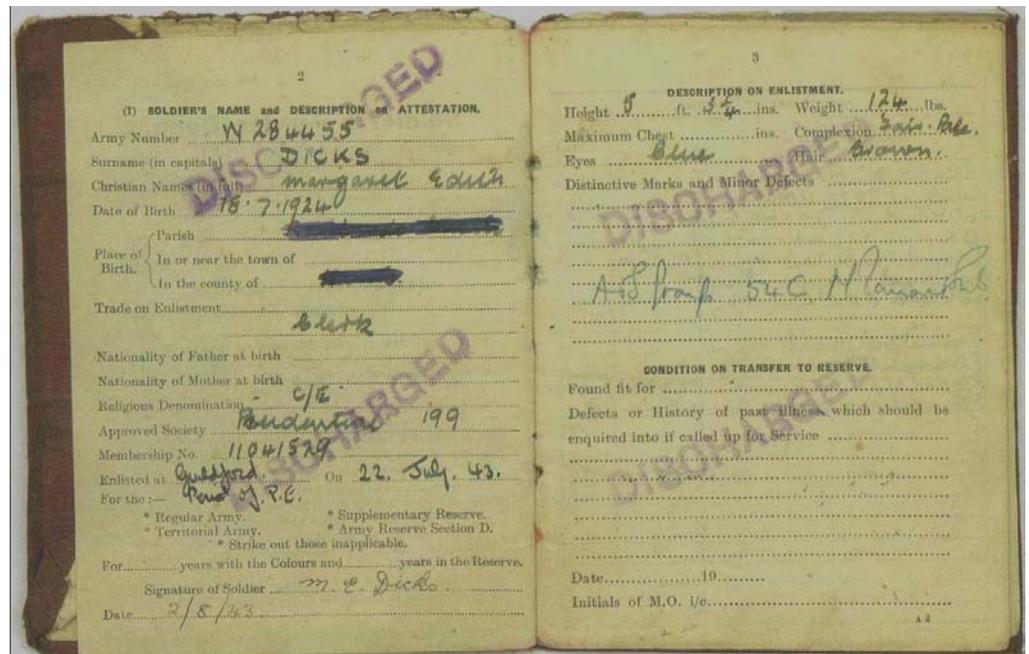


|  |   |                                  |                 |
|--|---|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Surname:</b><br>Houghton  | <b>First Name(s):</b><br>Margaret   | <b>Army Number:</b><br>W/284455  |                 |
| <b>Maiden name (if applicable):</b><br>Dicks   | <b>Name used during service:</b><br>Dicks   | <b>Rank:</b><br>Private          |                 |
| <b>Main base:</b><br>Shrewsbury  | <b>Training base:</b><br>Guildford, Surrey  | <b>Enrolled at:</b><br>Guildford |                 |
| <b>Platoon/Section:</b>  | <b>Company/Battery:</b><br>R.A.O.C.   | <b>Group/Regiment:</b><br>ATS    | <b>Command:</b> |
| <b>Year(s) of service:</b><br>22/7/1943 to<br>30/11/1945   | <b>Reason for discharge:</b>  | <b>Trade:</b><br>Storewoman      |                 |
| <b>Uniform Issued:</b><br>Cap<br>Jacket<br>Skirt<br>Shirts<br>Collars<br>Stockings<br>Shoes<br>Overcoat<br>Underwear | <b>Photo:</b><br>  |                                  |                 |
| <b>Description of daily tasks:</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We were always awakened by the officer on duty, and there was no sleeping in as the first ones up got to use the bathroom first, we were always expected to leave it as we found it so that it was always clean. After that we had to take our beds apart and fold everything up in a neat bundle and placed at the bottom of the bed, we were allowed to leave it made up only on our days off. Our kit box had to be neat with everything in its place.</li> <li>• Then off to breakfast, it was always something nice bacon and eggs, fried bread and toast and jam or marmalade. Everything went by the clock as soon as we finished breakfast it was off to work in the trucks.</li> <li>• I was the only girl in the Kit Store office so I was kept quite busy, all the other girls</li> </ul> |                                  |                 |

seemed to be busy cleaning the trucks as it was a V.R.D. they had a whole road blocked off with vehicles parked on either side.

- At around Eleven o'clock the Sally Ann came around with hot chocolate and maybe doughnuts if you were lucky. Then off to lunch, and back to work until 5 o'clock when the truck came to pick us up for the journey back to the hall where we lived.
- After supper we were always busy doing our hair or having a bath etc. Then it was cleaning all the brass on our uniform, cleaning our shoes, it was all spit and polish you never knew when the officer would call an inspection. We used to put our skirts under the mattress on our beds to keep them looking well pressed and nice. We didn't have a lot of spare time and if I did have any it was writing letters. I was always waiting for a letter from my boyfriend and all the girls let me know if there was anything in the guard room. It got to be quite funny they all wanted to be first with the news.

**Pay book:**



**Memorable moments:**

- I met my husband at the beginning of the war - he was in the Canadian Army R.C.A. 7th Anti-Tank Regt. When he was sent overseas it prompted me to join the services and I chose the A.T.S. I had never been away from home before and it was a big step although I have never regretted it.
- I joined the ATS on 22 July 1943 at Guildford Surrey and proceeded to go into training. I enjoyed all the drills on the parade ground and felt so proud and important, the only thing was I had to leave my family. I was the eldest of ten children and missed them terribly. However, I immediately made so many friends that it made up for it.
- When I first went into the A.T.S. I was called a Storewoman and we had jobs like spray painting trucks with paint to camouflage them, changing tires on those big trucks and I thought "I don't think I am cut out for this job", so I asked if I could change to a clerk. I thought I would be more suited to that. Well I passed the test and became Clerk C.II and then Re-Mustered and was Upgraded to Clerk C.1 in April 1945 and as you know the war ended that year.
- I can't remember all the details of my life but we were first sent to Northampton and we were billeted in Castle Ashby that was different! We had bunk beds all around in one of these big rooms and I was wondering how Royalty ever got cosy

as they were so bit and cold. Anyway we always cuddled up in blanket and were quite happy. We had our meals in one of those huts they put up for that purpose.

- We got moved again to Shrewsbury in Shropshire and worked at 60 VRD. We lived in a big estate called Cound Hall and we were taken into work in a big truck. I worked in the Kit Store and I enjoyed it very much. My job was to keep track of all the tools etc. that were placed on all the trucks. I had filing cards for that purpose. I worked under the men and they were all very nice. We used to go to lunch at a lady's house and every day we had beans on toast I think it was about the only thing that wasn't rationed . Anyway we didn't seem to get tired of it, one thing for sure we always had lots to eat and were never hungry.
- We all went downtown to get out pictures taken on the main street in Shrewsbury at the Polyphoto shop that was where they take a lot of small pictures and you had to choose what ones you liked the best.
- I was stationed at another place but I just can't seem to remember where it was, we used to have to get up early and go running through the fields and our feet would get soaking from the dew on the ground. A lot of the girls didn't like it and tried to hide in the toilets. I think they must have got away with it as I don't seem to remember them getting into trouble. I was too chicken to break any rules.
- Some of the girls I remember are Susan Crockett, Kathy Playdon. I don't know of course if they married and have different names now.
- My boyfriend came home at the end of the war and we were married on September 1st 1945 he was shipped back to Canada almost immediately so I went back to the camp until November 1945 when I was discharged due to the fact I was expecting a baby, so that ended my career in the forces.

**Photos:**





Cound Hall, Shropshire